The Nation.

May 6, 1991

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EDITORIAL

# BONES OF CONTENTION

Should George Bush resign from Yale's Skull and Bones club because it blackballs women? Even Judge Kenneth Ryskamp belatedly resigned from a discriminatory country club.

The supersecret Skull and Bones, which Bush joined more than forty years ago, has been in the spotlight lately because the fifteen seniors who make up its on-campus complement defied the 159-year-old tradition excluding women and "tapped" seven. The society's board of trustees promptly nullified the induction and changed the locks on the tomblike meeting place in New Haven. The board had proposed separate but equal membership for women as a compromise between old-grad Bonesmen—who object to women out of mossback sexism or, more politely, on the theory that their presence would inhibit the lengthy life-history confessions members make—and the younger members, who say exclusion of women is wrong and an anachronism. The seniors rejected the board's proposal and the board ejected them.

So where's George? Despite repeated queries from *Nation* intern Amy Lowrey weeks ago, he remains silent, true to Bones tradition.

In a country where segregated public schools are making a comeback, where students at CUNY protest tuition hikes en masse, where even affluent school districts are cutting back on teaching staff, where faculties at universities like Yale are dominated by white men, the problems of an elitist secret society are only a tiny microcosm of the inequality throughout education. And so, when Bush introduced his long-promised education package, someone should have asked him where he stands on sexism at Skull and Bones. If he won't condemn it, he should at least resign as the Education President.

KURDS (AGAIN)
Christopher Hitchens

TECHNO-WAR IN BAGHDAD
Erika Munk

RE: THE LEFT
Andrew Kopkind

FEAR IN ALBANIA
Kenneth Roth

MAGIC FEMINISM
Patricia Hart

STEAM PUNK
Gene Santoro

OPERA STYLE
Edward W. Said

THE NICOTINE PUSHERS

# MARKETING TOBACCO TO CHILDREN

MORTON MINTZ

It's an enduring, solemn claim of the global tobacco industry that it spends billions of dollars annually on advertising and promotion solely to persuade smokers to switch brands and to retain brand loyalty. Never, the industry would have you believe, does it seek to tempt nonsmokers, least of all children under 18, to take up the habit.

With almost no one noticing, however, that claim was devastated at the trial of a lawsuit challenging the constitutionality of Canada's Tobacco Products Control Act of 1988, which severely restricted cigarette advertising and promotion. The plaintiffs were Imperial Tobacco Ltd., owned by the giant British American Tobacco Company (BAT also owns Brown & Williamson Tobacco Company in the United States), and RJR-Macdonald Inc., owned by RJR Nabisco, the U.S. conglomerate. Judge Jean-Jude Chabot of Quebec Superior Court in Montreal presided at the nine-month trial, which began in September 1989. His ruling is still awaited.

In defending the act, the government put in evidence internal corporate documents that describe with stunning candor how the industry deliberately hooks children and markets to them. Imperial had generated the most revealing of these documents, which have gone almost wholly unpublicized, even in Canada.

Let's begin with Imperial's 1971 marketing plan for the Matinée brand. "Young smokers represent the major opportunity group for the cigarette industry,"

(*Cont. on p. 591*)

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# EXCHANGE.

*We received more mail on "The Gulf War as Mental Disorder," Lloyd deMause's March 11 article detailing the nation's readiness for war from a psychohistorian's perspective, than on any article on the war. Nearly 40 percent of the letters came from professionals in the fields of psychology, medicine and history, most taking issue with part, or all, of the article. Readers who approved (about 25 percent) applauded "the use of psychoanalytic technique as a tool for understanding historical events," thought "psychohistory . . . compensate[s] for psychology's ahistorical character," felt the article "helped me greatly to understand why we did it," found it "apt" but, if anything, "not far-reaching enough" and pointed out that it was Nietzsche who said, "Insanity in individuals is something rare—but in groups, parties, nations and epochs it is the rule."*

*Detractors tended to terms such as "dubious approach," "pseudo-science," "idiocy," "magical thinking," "psychobabble." They wrote, "Psychologizing is a sign of the decay of critical thought and a blight on the political culture"; "[deMause] misappropriates the vocabulary of psychology"; "psychohistory is mostly rubbish and you fell for it"; "the body politic is not like an individual person"; "I prefer more pedestrian concepts to explain recent events: greed, love of power, exploitation . . . "; "a look at a map of Iraq and Kuwait [gives] a clear image of . . . this conquest in terms of Saddam's 'castration complex' "; and "keep up the good reporting, but leave the psychological stuff to Dr. Ruth."*

*The following letter sums up the positions of many of the letter writers.*

## MAGICAL MYSTERY WAR

*Richmond, Calif.*

Psychologism is an appealing simplicity. Since we believe we understand ourselves and know we do not understand society, we are easily enticed into explaining complex socioeconomic events on the analogy of personal motivation. Lloyd deMause stands in a long tradition of this reductionism, which includes such notable figures as Freud, who wrote that "sociology is applied psychology," the credo of the subjectivist tradition. DeMause's intellectually porous and politically reactionary version of the position is simply, as he himself might have it, the sort of mythology that people turn to in times of perplexing events. Some of the "disorders" of the article:

DeMause continually refers to the homicidal and suicidal acts of "entire nations." Wars, however, are not planned or executed by entire nations; they are the work of a small portion of the military-industrial executive, of the ruling class, to use a more classical term. Nor do they require the support of a large percentage of the citizenry. All that is necessary for their enactment is the absence of intense protest from a large majority.

It is not true that the diagnostic symptoms of nations are similar to those of individuals—perhaps the basic fallacy of deMause's essay. The reasons stretch beyond the possibility of simple reply, but basically they derive from the fact that nations are constituted out of the *institutionally ordered* relationship of individuals while individuals are not. Nation-states have economic class interests (dominant influence in the setting of oil prices and Eurodollar flows, hegemony, etc.) while individuals do not. And individuals have characteristics, such as guilt and desire, that can be attributed to nations only by a fallacy of composition.

More concretely, images of "the terrifying parent" and "the hurt child" have been appearing in the U.S. media for well more than the past decade. From the scholarly work of Alice Miller to a plague of preschool molestation events and fictions, the American public has been assaulted by such presentations. But that was exactly the time Iraq was at war with Iran; exactly the time we were supporting Iraq despite its many human rights abuses and its "terrifying" use of chemical weapons. Yet "we" did not call for war against Iraq during this period, a fact easily explainable on geopolitical grounds but unintelligible for psycho-mystery unless it further augments its vacuity with additional epicycles.

DeMause commandeers a certain unearned plausibility by referring to such states of mind as depression, guilt, dread and nostalgia. This gives his argument a ring of authenticity, for clearly such emotional states abound. But this is precisely the problem, for there is never a time when some survey will not reveal some characterological disposition. That is what renders the theory intellectually porous—it has no power to explain events because it can be made to refer to any situation one wishes to explain. So, for example, post-traumatic-stress-disorder feelings are experienced prior to wars, but they are also experienced in situations that bear little resemblance to the original traumas: experiences of rising expectations and the advent of good fortune. A very versatile theory, indeed.

Furthermore, in order to provide himself with the greatest possible latitude in the construction of his emotional psychodrama, deMause continually abstracts the feelings involved from their real context: "If a patient were to walk into a psychiatric clinic suffering from intrusive images of terrifying figures torturing children, *severe depression unrelated to current life events*, and suicidal wishes . . . " This is exactly where the superficially sympathetic account of popular consciousness in terms of P.T.S.D. reveals its reactionary foundation. The "severe depression" that undoubtedly afflicts many Americans is hardly "unrelated to current life events." Psychological states of mind certainly need to be incorporated into any account of popular participation in mass events. But these states must be analyzed as they are ingredients of public, social events and not as the abstracted and reified archetypes of a universal mind awaiting propitious circumstances for their leap into life.

When deMause turns from P.T.S.D. preceding periods of war to P.T.S.D. following periods of prosperity, he is undaunted. The explanation is simple enough—victims of childhood trauma believe themselves to be undeserving of good fortune and so suffer further trauma. Once again, the reification of the nation-state wholly obscures the class composition of "prosperity." There may have occurred a period of increasing prosperity for the upper 20 percent of the population during the last decade, but the rest remained stagnant or declined. The "irresponsible binge" that afflicted "Americans" is another instance of the terrible ideological mystification produced by psychologism. Furthermore, no account of guilt and prosperity will begin to explain the advent of war. Did World War II occur after a period of "economic prosperity"? The United States was still mired in depression and began to extract itself only through the government spending that the war required. If increased prosperity is the source of guilt, suicide and military violence, the Swiss should have been rampaging over Europe for the past 400 years.

There is no need to run through the rest of deMause's mythological anthropology of Aztec "flower wars," ritual humiliations and purification rites. Even if they are valid accounts of a culture of some past time, they are not currently significant. And the reason is not that contemporary populations cannot be moved by appeals to deeply held emotional predispositions. Men and women are certainly moved by many of the general motivations that deMause refers to. But these desires must be specified through current social realities. Anger is not simply anger in various cultures. The kind of rage necessary to decapitate an enemy in hand-to-hand combat is considerably different from the emotional disposition required to launch a laser-guided missile at 30,000 feet. That is the banality of evil.

Had the President announced in January that civilized reason required us to avoid the death of tens of thousands of innocent men, women and children in the pursuit of a goal that we could achieve without violence, the American population would undoubtedly have accepted that decision. It might have experienced less primitive passion, sublimated violence or projected domination. But these are not the issues that determine world events. And now, in the shadow of the multinational nation-state, less than ever. Feelings are more the result of world events, national priorities and class fortunes than their causes. That is the alienated condition of the present

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# EDITORIALS.

## Pressing Freedom

"Prudence," wrote Judge Leonard Sand of the U.S. District Court for Southern New York, "dictates that a final determination of the important constitutional issues at stake be left for another day when the controversy is more sharply focused." With those words he dismissed the complaint of *The Nation*, *Harper's*, *In These Times*, Pacific News Service, *The Guardian*, *The Progressive*, *Mother Jones*, *L.A. Weekly*, *The Village Voice*, *The Texas Observer*, Pacifica Radio News and various individuals who collectively challenged Pentagon censorship of gulf war coverage.

Although Judge Sand refused to accept the argument of *The Nation* et al. that Defense Department manipulation and control of the news media violated the First and Fifth Amendments, he did so, he said, because the issues raised were "not sufficiently in focus." The war, after all, is over, the Pentagon guidelines are inoperative and no alternative guidelines were on the table. "In a case of such moment, involving significant and novel constitutional doctrines," Judge Sand wrote, "the Court must have the benefit of a well-focused controversy."

But the Court was not unmindful that this was the third time, after Grenada and Panama, that the Pentagon has gotten away with excluding the kind of press coverage appropriate

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to an open society, even (especially) in time of war, when lives are at stake. The decision puts the Pentagon on notice that its next incursion into the people's right to know may not survive judicial scrutiny.

To the Defense Department's contention that the plaintiffs had no standing to sue, Judge Sand said that the harms alleged were "distinct and palpable," and thus sufficient to grant such standing. Second, he found "unpersuasive DOD's primary argument that the political question doctrine [that the judiciary should not get enmeshed in "political thickets"] bars [the] court from adjudicating any claims that involve the United States military." The Pentagon is not above the law, even (especially) in time of war. And finally, his opinion implies that if future plaintiffs move with dispatch in a case "sufficiently concrete and focused," a court might well bar the government from repeating its crimes against free speech.

Judge Sand's ruling was not a victory for the press. But to the extent that his reasoning and findings constitute legal precedent they bode ill for government censors in future wars.

# The Wrong Map

George Bush's "new world order" appears to be tolerant of a murderous Iraqi regime barely two months after its decisive defeat. Yet it continues to isolate Vietnam a full sixteen years after that April day in 1975 when the last U.S. troops pulled out of Saigon.

Although Bush marked victory over Iraq by delivering a ringing post-mortem on the hated "Vietnam syndrome," this has had remarkably little bearing on U.S. policy toward Vietnam. In Washington the Vietnam syndrome is thriving, and the U.S. economic and diplomatic embargo of Vietnam maintains its steel grip.

What then of the high-level talks that Washington has been pursuing with Hanoi, most recently in New York on April 9 at the State Department's request? Assistant Secretary of State Richard Solomon presented Vietnam's ambassador to the United Nations, Trinh Xuan Lang, with a detailed four-phase plan aimed at settling the bitter Cambodian civil war as the basis for normalizing relations with Vietnam. For the first time the Administration has outlined what it calls a "road map" of the steps Vietnam and Cambodia must take in exchange for full diplomatic recognition, an end to the trade embargo and the resumption of development loans from the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank.

Before any progress can be made, Hanoi must first agree to the Cambodian peace accord that the five permanent members of the U.N. Security Council drafted last year. It must also pressure its allies in Phnom Penh to reach the same conclusion. Of course, this is exactly the trouble. Hanoi has been highly skeptical of the U.N. plan for Cambodia, fearing it could return the Khmer Rouge to power. Vietnam kept its troops in Cambodia for eleven years to prevent that, forfeiting world favor, and is not about to fall prey to a document it regards as a Trojan horse.

Not surprisingly, Vietnam quickly dismissed the U.S. "road map" because of its insistence on linkage to a Cambodian settlement. The United States should recognize Hanoi without conditions, Ho The Lan, a Vietnamese Foreign Ministry official, said on April 15. "Normalization of U.S.-Vietnam ties will facilitate their bilateral cooperation in settling the Cambodian question," she predicted.

Hanoi also reiterated its claim that it wields no influence over Phnom Penh and denied U.S. charges that large numbers of Vietnamese troops remain in Cambodia eighteen months after their official withdrawal. Vietnam may well have more say in Cambodia than it admits, but the United States is wrong to hold Vietnam hostage over this. What the Administration refuses to see—or perhaps sees all too well—is that dictating Cambodian policy to the Vietnamese will surely fail. "There is no change in our basic policy," a senior Administration official admitted in a discussion of the road map proposal. As long as Washington continues to link Vietnam to Cambodia, there will be no shift in Hanoi's policy either.

Some members of Congress, including leading Republicans, are growing impatient with the Administration's obtuseness. So are major U.S. business interests, which see their competitors taking advantage of the trade opportunities offered by Vietnam's recent market-oriented reforms. Support is building among lawmakers for Washington to scrap the trade embargo and recognize Vietnam, although such a move is ultimately a presidential decision.

The White House's road map was timed to mollify this opposition and attempt to gain the upper hand. A Senate Foreign Relations Committee adviser observed, "It's calculated to achieve maximum domestic easing of Congressional pressure while giving away as little as possible."

It also is no coincidence that Assistant Secretary Solomon met with the Vietnamese only a day before testifying at Congressional hearings on Cambodia. Solomon informed wary legislators that the Administration wants another $25 million in nonlethal aid this fiscal year to support the two non-Communist resistance groups fighting the Phnom Penh government along with the Khmer Rouge.

While the White House and Congress trade rhetoric, any future Vietnamese cooperation on Cambodia may be in jeopardy. Vietnamese Communist Party members are slated to convene their seventh party congress in Hanoi this June. The previous session, in 1986, brought economic reforms that achieved limited success, but some conservative party members fear this opening to the West. Should they wrest control from more reform-minded officials, Vietnam could easily change course.

President Bush now has a unique opportunity to give Vietnamese reformers a boost and prove that his "new world order" is magnanimous. Washington should officially unlink Vietnam from Cambodia and move now to establish diplomatic relations with Hanoi. Vietnam's cooperation so far on both Cambodia and the 2,200 Americans missing since the end of the Vietnam War should be sufficient evidence of good faith. This would upset many who still believe that Vietnam will never deserve redemption, but it could deliver stability to this tormented region of the world.

JONATHAN BURTON

*Jonathan Burton writes frequently on Asian affairs.*

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# Secret Tribunal

On March 12 when President Bush unveiled his domestic crime bill, he urged Congress to enact the measure as a way of welcoming home the soldiers who fought in the gulf. The crime bill's provisions for deporting foreign "terrorists" do parallel some aspects of Operation Desert Storm, but not ones Bush would like to acknowledge. Just as the Administration kept the press from observing its military effort in the Middle East, it now proposes secrecy in proceedings to expel immigrants from this country. And in both initiatives, while the Administration talks of the need to punish heinous crimes, the main victims of its actions are not criminals but foreign citizens with the wrong political allegiances.

Under the Bush crime bill, the government could decline to reveal publicly any evidence it deems confidential and which it seeks to use to deport a foreign citizen for "terrorist activity." Moreover, it can conceal the evidence not only from the public but from the foreign citizens themselves, thereby depriving them of any chance to defend themselves.

Some might consider such drastic action warranted to respond to terrorist threats. But the right to due process of law does not turn on the gravity of the government's accusations; we give as much if not more procedural protection to those charged with serial murders or treason as to those charged with income tax evasion.

More disturbing is the government's sweeping interpretation of the word "terrorism." To the Immigration and Naturalization Service, "terrorist activity" includes not only setting a bomb but also fundraising or recruiting members for any organization or government body that has engaged in unlawful violent activity. Thus the definition turns not on what a person has done but with whom he or she has associated. Obviously this treads on First Amendment rights of association. In a secret trial, who is to know if the government's "evidence" consists of illegal acts or constitutionally protected associations?

The government's definition of "terrorist activity" is so broad that, if consistently applied, it would cover all foreign citizens who have raised funds for the African National Congress, the government of Israel, the Irish Republican Army or the Kurdish rebels in Iraq. Of course, the "terrorism" label is not applied consistently. Those who use violence to achieve ends consistent with Administration policy are "freedom fighters." The likelihood of selective enforcement underscores the injustice of deportation trials held in secret.

The government would no doubt find the secrecy provisions convenient. For the past four years, it has been attempting to deport seven Palestinians and a Kenyan who, it alleges, are associated with a "terrorist" organization, the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (P.F.L.P.) [see Eve Pell, "Kicking Out Palestinians," February 5, 1990]. The F.B.I. investigated the eight for three years and concluded, according to then–F.B.I. Director William Webster, that none of them had engaged in any criminal activity, much less terrorism. Nevertheless the I.N.S. arrested the eight at gunpoint and seeks deportation for their alleged support of a terrorist group, claiming to have "confidential" information that supports its charges. Under the new crime bill, the I.N.S. could summarily deport these people without ever revealing what, if anything, it has against them.

In another case, the I.N.S. has been trying without success to expand a little-used provision in the existing immigration laws to do what President Bush's crime bill would do explicitly—authorize secret trials. Existing law allows the I.N.S. to use undisclosed information to keep foreign citizens out of the country if disclosure of the information would be "prejudicial to the public interest." Previously this law has been used only against those who have not yet entered the country and thus are held to have no constitutional rights. Now the I.N.S. is attempting to use it against Fouad Rafeedie, a Palestinian-born permanent resident who has lived here peacefully for fifteen years. The government claims he belongs to the P.F.L.P. and that in 1986 he attended a P.L.O.-connected youth conference in Syria. Two federal courts have preliminarily enjoined the proceeding on the ground that it would deny Rafeedie his due process right to a public trial.

The terrorism provisions in the crime bill would hide such government actions from the public. As President Bush proved in the Persian Gulf, enforced secrecy can avoid much embarrassment. But as the Framers of our Constitution recognized long ago, and as we were all recently reminded by the videotape of Los Angeles cops beating a suspect, the light of public scrutiny is crucial to keeping government power in check. The new domestic order should not sanction a return to the seventeenth-century Star Chamber.

DAVID COLE

*David Cole, a professor at Georgetown University Law Center, is a volunteer staff attorney at the Center for Constitutional Rights.*

★

## THE KURDS ARE INTERNAL

*The Kurds are internal, tra-la, tra-la,*
*The Kurds are internal affairs.*
*Their slaughter's a pity, tra-la, tra-la,*
*But hardly our problem. It's theirs.*
*We'll feed them and clothe them, tra-la, tra-la,*
*Then back to their homeland they'll wend.*
*Till next time we tell them, tra-la, tra-la,*
*To rise and be slaughtered again.*
*With troubles eternal, tormenters infernal,*
*It's still just fraternal, tra-la, tra-la.*
*The Kurds are internal affairs.*

*Calvin Trillin*

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# MINORITY REPORT.

CHRISTOPHER HITCHENS

It was a bad day for the Kurdish nation when the American talking classes began comparing Kurds to Palestinians. Disposability could be the only outcome. At present, the *political* honors are about even; the Palestinians were never even promised any aid, let alone a state, by the Administration. Faced, for the moment, with a denial of their right to self-determination, they made the stupid error of placing at least part of their trust in Saddam Hussein. The Kurds, faced with a serious challenge to their right to exist, put their faith in George Bush. And now Iraqi pilots and soldiers are presumably speaking in gross tones about the "turkey shoots," "fish-in-a-barrel" hunts and "cockroach raids" with which they seek to erase the shame of the Kuwait syndrome.

This horrific betrayal is remarkable for being one of the few instances of an almost exact historical replay. On my desk since August last has been a bootleg copy of the Pike commission report, the 1976 findings of the House Select Committee on Intelligence, chaired by Representative Otis Pike. So damning were the disclosures of this report that the White House and the C.I.A. convinced a more than usually supine Congress to suppress it until an executive censorship had been imposed on the text. The reason for this concealing action becomes immediately clear if one turns to the pages that deal with the Nixon-Kissinger program, begun in 1973, of using the Kurdish insurgency in northern Iraq to destabilize the Baathist regime in Baghdad. With the help of the Shah of Iran and the Israeli Mossad, a policy of aid and encouragement was followed with these predictable results, according to the Pike commission:

> The apparent "no win" policy of the U.S. and its ally [Iran] deeply disturbed this Committee. Documents in the Committee's possession clearly show that the President, Dr. Kissinger and the foreign head of state [the Shah] hoped that our clients [the Kurds] would not prevail. They preferred instead that the insurgents simply continue a level of hostilities sufficient to sap the resources of our ally's neighboring country [Iraq]. This policy was not imparted to our clients, who were encouraged to continue fighting. Even in the context of covert action, ours was a cynical enterprise.

After the Shah and Saddam had temporarily composed their differences at a summit of OPEC nations in 1975, the Kurds were dumped by the Peacock Throne and by its chief ally, the United States. The Baathists moved into Kurdistan in strength:

> The insurgents were clearly taken by surprise as well. Their adversaries, knowing of the impending aid cut-off, launched an all-out search-and-destroy campaign the day after the agreement was signed. The autonomy movement was over and our former clients scattered before the central government's superior forces.
>
> The cynicism of the U.S. and its ally had not yet completely run its course, however. Despite direct pleas from the insurgent leader and the C.I.A. station chief in the area to the President and Dr. Kissinger, the U.S. refused to extend humanitarian assistance to the thousands of refugees created by the abrupt termination of military aid. As the Committee staff was reminded by a high U.S. official, "covert action should not be confused with missionary work."

No indeed. The man who became Director of Central Intelligence at the time that the Kurdistan "operation" was being hastily covered up and the findings of the Pike commission censored was of course George Herbert Walker Bush. Having understood once that the Kurds were to be sacrificed for an alliance with the Shah, what could come more naturally to him than a later sacrifice, on a grander scale, for the sake of an alliance with Saudi Arabia?

In other words, all the driveling liberals who regard the current nightmare in Kurdistan as a blot on the fine record of Desert Storm have got it exactly wrong. For Bush, the connection between his two public roles (Desert Stormtrooper and Desert Rat) is a direct one. The Saudis desire a Sunni military dictatorship in Baghdad, which could be five or fifty times as cruel as Saddam so long as it is one and a half times as compliant with Saudi Arabian and American desires. And as partner, paymaster and client, what the Saudis want the Saudis will get.

How elevating it was to see my old friend Daniel Pipes arguing in *The Wall Street Journal* of April 11 that the United States should not now involve itself too much in inter-Arab and Kurdish disputes. Pipes is a perfect little register of Administration opportunism—only a few months ago he was touting the "Hitler" line and calling for air and ground war. Now he can live with the infliction of a Dresden on the Iraqi people, coupled with the simultaneous protection of the "Hitler" himself.

Bear in mind what Bush and his "people" have done. They have smashed the civilian infrastructure of an entire country, deliberately tearing apart the web of water, electricity and sewage lines that held it together. They have killed at least 100,000 conscripts (neatly sparing the "elite Republican Guard" in order to conform to Saudi wishes) and a vast, uncounted number of noncombatants. They have prepared the way for the next wave of Apocalyptic horsemen in the form of famine and pestilence, described chillingly in reports from the U.N. and the International Red Cross. Their forces continue to occupy territory in Iraq. This is, perhaps, an odd position from which to declare that they have no interest in Iraqi internal affairs.

Consider what has been done to a people with whom the President announced that we had "no quarrel," and then consider what is now being done to another people in whose name, at least in part, the crusade for freedom was launched. Then do as I have been doing. Make a telephone call to the White House, or to your senator and representative in Congress, or to the State Department, and ask what has happened to the proposal that there be a war-crimes trial at the conclusion of hostilities. I guarantee that you will derive some dry amusement from the response, though the amusement soon wears off, to be replaced by thoughts of quite another kind.

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# ARTICLES.

WITNESS IN BAGHDAD

# The New Face Of Techno-war

ERIKA MUNK

What if war is not only that hell whose face has become so familiar but also something else, a new kind of hell, harder to resist not only for those who wage it but for those who oppose it?

Recently I spent four days in Baghdad with a small group of longtime peace activists who'd gone there to document civilian damage caused by the U.S. bombing. We were pretty sure what we'd see. We expected to find enormous unreported destruction. We wanted to flesh out, house by house and family by family, the words of the United Nations mission, which flew out at us from *The New York Times* on March 23, the day we set off: "Iraq has, for some time to come, been relegated to a pre-industrial age."

Instead we found a city whose homes and offices were almost entirely intact, where the electricity was coming back on and the water was running. Not a normal place—scarcity, grief, hardship and apprehension marked it—but postindustrial enough for us to be caught in a lot of traffic jams.

A generation ago, the language of American death-dealing was, "We'll bomb them back to the Stone Age." Now, in Baghdad, that language no longer describes the truth. Baghdad isn't the whole country (though it holds almost a quarter of its population), nor is it representative of the rest of Iraq or the damage done there. But what we saw, and what we didn't see, has more frightening implications than if we'd stood in endless rubble.

When a capital city's communications centers can be destroyed with little damage to the surrounding buildings or people; when a nation's infrastructure can be crippled so that the deadliest effects appear long after the world's eye has moved elsewhere; when high-tech, low-gore war can be combined with heavy censorship—then any nation willing to forfeit its social and economic development to weapons can exert power at will, deny moral responsibility and avoid popular revulsion.

The bombing of the Amiriya shelter, where Americans incinerated still-uncounted hundreds of Iraqi women and children, and the slaughter on the Kuwaiti highways, where Americans picked off retreating soldiers as if it were sport, evoked public horror, as such atrocities always have. But from what we saw in Baghdad, that kind of war now coexists with something else—call it techno-war—that is not just a figment of Pentagon propaganda and can't be countered as if it were.

*Erika Munk is a New York writer who is also teaching at the Yale School of Drama.*

Our group—Don Mosley from Fellowship of Reconciliation, Ed Griffin-Nolan from Witness for Peace, Rick Reinhard from Impact Visuals, and myself, accompanied by Abdul Kadir al-Kaysi, an Iraqi-American who interpreted for Ramsey Clark during Clark's February visit [see Clark, "A War Crime," March 11]—went to Baghdad specifically to document civilian casualties and harm to the infrastructure. The Iraqis knew this, and knew that FOR had shipped fourteen tons of medicine to Iraq during the war. They had no conceivable interest in preventing us from seeing every particle of damage. And though many people have suggested that "Arab pride" (perhaps a patronizing concept?) might have made them play down or hide casualties, everyone we spoke to—pro- or anti-Baath Party, behind a desk or on the street—was emphatic about the disaster that had befallen the city and eager to impress on us how bad things were. Iraqi officials may have been preoccupied with insurrection; bureaucrats and police-state paranoia limited our mobility; but I think the reason we didn't see more destruction was that it wasn't there.

Our Baghdad home was the first surprise. A rather posh Red Crescent hospital, scheduled to open in September 1990, had been turned into a free way-station for peace and aid workers. The electricity functioned except for a few hours at night, the rooms had hot and/or cold water, the lobby TV was on and the kitchen had a gas stove, purified water and adequate food (lamb, rice, vegetables, tea). If such relative comfort and lack of medical urgency—didn't they *need* this hospital?—was typical, every preconception I'd come with was wrong; if exceptional, the allocation of resources was very peculiar.

We traveled around the city in a Red Crescent bus that had

ILLUSTRATIONS BY CHRISTOPHE VORLET

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brought us from Jordan. Although we hadn't planned it this way, the entire visit was under the auspices and sharp eyes of the Iraqi Red Crescent Society (on three evenings I and some of the others grabbed a cab and went out, twice to the Al-Rashid Hotel and once to a fish restaurant on the river). Using a 1983 map of Baghdad, I have roughly retraced our itinerary. We drove many times on the expressways that crisscross the city and, off them, went through all ages and classes of neighborhoods. We questioned everyone we met about casualties; bomb damage; communications; the food, water and fuel supplies; and health.

To start with the casualties: We heard estimates ranging from 500 to 1,600 killed in the Amiriya shelter. Dr. Boghos Paul Boghossian, director of Yarmuk Hospital, where the first bodies were received, said that Amiriya had been reserved for "V.I.P.s" until two weeks before the bombing, when the local population was admitted.

*This would be the lowest number of civilian deaths from the bombing of a major city in the history of modern war.*

Boghossian estimated that 1,000 civilians (in addition to those from Amiriya) were treated at Yarmuk during the war and that 150-200 of them died (he later told us 100-150). He wouldn't extrapolate from this to a total for the city, but he did say that Yarmuk was Baghdad's primary surgical center, one of its largest hospitals and the closest to many of the communications centers targeted for multiple attacks.

We were taken to only one scene of neighborhood destruction, Kadhimiya, where nine homes were bombed and forty people were killed, according to residents. From the bus we also saw a similar but smaller area and a few separate destroyed homes. The Iraqi government estimated, for the U.N. mission, that 2,500 homes in Baghdad were damaged beyond repair, but from what I saw this is not credible.

The most glaring physical damage was to telecommunications centers. We saw six of these buildings, stripped to their girders, and didn't doubt that all fifteen were demolished. They're strange monuments to a general's notion of what's precise and clean, these huge lumps of crumpled tinfoil. Next to one, a shopping center was wrecked; around the others some adjacent buildings were affected. People living near these sites told us that two or three night workers were killed at each one, and we heard of one woman killed when a missile hit her house.

If each of Baghdad's major hospitals saw as many war deaths as Yarmuk; if there were a couple of areas like Kadhimiya; if thirty-five workers died at the communications buildings and 100 others were in the wrong place at the wrong time; if we take the high estimate of the Amiriya deaths—then America's "clean" bombing of Baghdad was the direct cause of 3,000 civilian deaths. "Surgical strikes" are dirty. But this would be the lowest number of civilian deaths from the bombing of a major city in the history of modern war: Consider the London Blitz, Dresden, Tokyo, Hiroshima, Nagasaki.

Of course, there have been and will continue to be indirect deaths caused by the devastation of Iraq's civilian infrastructure. As reflected in what we saw of daily life in Baghdad, the effects of this damage are in part already being repaired and in part just now becoming evident.

Private communications were a mess, affecting hospitals as well as families. Not once did we hear a phone ring (though I saw a construction worker talking into a portable phone). Messages had to be delivered by hand. Government communication, on the other hand, worked—newspapers came out every day, television was omnipresent.

Residents said that all sections of the city had electricity at least part of the day. Hospitals and many government offices had generators, and we saw that the main streets were lit at night. Gasoline is severely rationed and very expensive on the black market, but traffic was heavy, with most cars carrying only one passenger. The main bus station was always very crowded. Night traffic was light, except for patrol cars carrying men with Kalashnikov rifles.

All the people we talked to said water was available in their neighborhood. The International Committee of the Red Cross began chlorination of the city's water right after the suspension of the bombing. Reinhard and Griffin-Nolan visited one of the city's three sewage-treatment plants (which discharge into the same river). Several people had told them it had been bombed, but it was intact, though working only part time for lack of electricity.

I saw butcher after butcher with half a dozen large carcasses hanging in his shop; street vendors everywhere hawked vegetables, fruit, bread and sweets. Prices, however, are said to be ten to fifteen times what they were before last August. The vegetable harvest will end in a month, baby formula is out of most mothers' reach and the ration of staples is insufficient to maintain health, according to both doctors and housewives. There was a perpetual queue at a government bakery we often passed, but we saw no lines at the regular shops. The streets were fairly clean, with no rotting heaps of garbage, except in the alleys of old Baghdad.

Everyone told us the real human cost of all these factors would show up slowly, and especially in the children. The hospitals we visited, Yarmuk and Saddam Central Children's Hospital, held no bombing casualties and were eerily empty and calm because, the doctors said, they lacked so many basic services—the electricity was erratic, the water pressure inadequate—that patients stayed home. We saw indirect victims—children with hideous burns from kerosene heaters, a few with serious diarrhea, premature babies sharing incubators, sick children sharing an oxygen cylinder—and heard heartbreaking stories of mothers in panic during the raids, tearing children off I.V.s to take them to shelters. But the cholera and typhoid epidemics that may come with the hot weather haven't shown up yet. Our group had arrived at a moment when the worst of the immediate past was no longer visible and the anticipated catastrophe hadn't yet occurred.

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Careful, objective documentation was difficult under the circumstances. Permission had to be asked for every photograph, however banal—ordinary street scenes were prohibited, as was one bombed bridge. We were never given a map, though we begged for one. Even the spoken word was not as easily informative as it should have been in a city where so many people know English. We were always accompanied by someone from a government organization; when I interviewed the head of the women's federation, who spoke fair English, not only was our "driver" there but so was a new interpreter and another woman, who sat next to me writing down each question and each answer. Under such circumstances, even the most plausible information they gave us needed confirmation.

We asked over and over to visit other cities near Baghdad or factories on the outskirts that were reported to have been bombed, but we were turned down. We were not allowed to go to Basra, where by that time the allied bomb damage, by all reports heavy—and not from the "smart" bombs reserved for Baghdad—would have been hard to sort out from damage caused by the Iran-Iraq war or by the civil war. On the other hand, we were encouraged to go to Karbala, where the blood was barely dry but where it had been shed at the hands of Iraqis. That the government wanted us to see exactly how they'd won showed a pretty basic misunderstanding of the peacenik mentality.

Addressing antiwar Americans can indeed be difficult. Very few people I've spoken to since I came back want to hear the good news that Baghdad wasn't razed. Not from callousness, of course. And not out of stupidity: It's easy enough to understand that someone who dies of hunger or disease, however many months after a cease-fire, is just as war-dead as someone hit by a bomb. What they seem to fear is that a bombing whose toll is long-term and still invisible isn't useful for mobilizing antiwar sentiment. They may be right. When I look at Rick Reinhard's contact sheets, the shots that "work" are a child standing in rubble, a veiled mother holding her kerosene-burned baby, a building blown down to its skeleton. Using these images, however, always implies that beyond the frame of that particular picture is a vast landscape of rubble and injury. This isn't true for what we saw; any right-winger with a fisheye lens could refute such an interpretation. But a photograph of untreated sewage pouring into a river from which people draw drinking water is just a picture of water flowing into water. A damaged electrical substation isn't emotionally useful, however profound its implications.

Perhaps to demonstrate how the new toys work, perhaps to cut Saddam Hussein down to size without taking away all his power, Baghdad was simultaneously saved and destroyed. The documentation and agitprop of antiwar protest must be reshaped in light of such new realities, and our activism must be less visually rooted, less sentimental and more analytical.

Press-managed aerial blitzkriegs like this one quickly disappear from public consciousness, leaving no dent of remorse. (Only now, with the heart-stopping images of Kurdish pain filling the airwaves, are the public's doubts surfacing.) Friendly fascism has already engendered the even worse prospect of

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friendly militarism. To counter it, we must address the idea that bullying control and the cruel misuse of resources are as dangerous an enemy as overt violence, and our consciences must be aroused not only by the images of wrongful death but of wrongful power as well. □

RETHINKING THE LEFT (CONT.)

# The Rising of The Wretched

*This is part of a series of articles on the future of the left that we will publish from time to time.* —*The Editors*

ANDREW KOPKIND

The great debate about the nature of the world order began with the breaching of the Berlin wall in November 1989. It ended barely fifteen months later with the invasion and destruction of Iraq. If the promise of a kind of socialism died in the wreckage of Central Europe, the greater promise of a capitalist order with peace, prosperity and opportunity for all perished in the carnage of the Persian Gulf war. For if the short space between those two historic bookends demonstrates anything, it is that capitalism is logically prevented by its own fatal flaws from delivering the goods, and that socialism still stands a chance. History is alive and kicking.

As freedom of the press (in A. J. Liebling's mighty line) is reserved for those who own one, so the free market is beneficial only to those who control it. Untold are the riches that late capitalism bestows on those lucky or clever enough to live and work close to the heart and brain of the beast. Never has life been better for some white Americans with M.B.A.s, German businessmen who know the Arabic words for "poison gas" and Japanese entrepreneurs with a knack for siting overseas factories in right-to-work hollows. In other words (racing from the particular to the general), the system is now more than ever based on oppressive relations of class, caste and race; on war and the violent manipulation of assets and aggressive protection of resources; and on the suppression of organized opposition to the world order in any of its component parts.

The most cursory glance at the world map and a few basic statistics will show how fatuous are the claims of triumphant capitalism, how fraudulent its guarantees of a good life for all who adhere to its dogma. As Robert Pollin and Alexander Cockburn amply illustrated in these pages two months ago [see "The World, the Free Market and the Left," February 25] the moment of greatest success in the capitalist heartland is the time of most misery in all the surrounding countries. Africa is an economic disaster area, Latin America is almost as bad, South and Southwest Asia barely survive and the born-again economies of Central Europe can scarcely provide even the minimum goods (and better services) that their peoples had under the old regimes, however "deformed."

Small elites are surely prospering in Third World capitals, and a few Asian island-states, which have eagerly sought integration with Western finance and business, are booming under authoritarian rule. Democracy's got nothing to do with anything; civil rights and liberties, mass participation in politics and workplace or community organizing are considered counterproductive to development. The idea that the free market somehow produces liberated lives is contradicted by all the evidence.

Individual countries and world capitalist institutions, such as the International Monetary Fund, throw money at the more slavish followers of the market line, but to no avail. There's nowhere near enough money to make a difference, and in any case the projects funded and coffers filled are intended to help the grantor more than the grantee. Capitalist development develops capitalism and keeps all others in thrall. And so everywhere there is increasing poverty, repression, conflict and alienation. This is not the rose garden the capitalist princes and professors promised.

The failures of capitalism in the Third World (an obsolete name, for which there is yet no more accurate and convenient term) are replicated within the nonwhite, non-Western, unskilled and, to a large extent, nonmale populations of the most prosperous national economies. By now it should be apparent to all that the capitalist order in America simply cannot lead the majority of its citizens (those who are casually categorized as "minorities," for greater ease of handling) into free-market hog heaven.

The reasons are not very arcane. First of all, those who have a lot of things and influence so strongly affect the system of allocation that they can block all attempts to redistribute wealth and power. Second, much of the disposable income that society gathers is used for social control—war, police, prisons, even welfare—rather than productive social investment. Of course, those reasons are intimately related. Maldistribution produces the reactions that the control methods are meant to treat. The more of the world's resources America must grab to maintain a cushy standard of living, the more it must spend on resource wars, ghetto sweeps, minimum welfare payoffs and maximum security prisons to protect its position.

Those who maintain that Western-style casino capitalism will fulfill the expectations it raises just can't face reality. Sure, if every *Nation* subscriber gave the magazine $5 it would make up its yearly deficit, but subscribers never act with such unanimity. Nor do corporate elites and the national executives with which they are interlocked. Many American companies won't even extend health care benefits to their employees, and more are seeking to cut back benefits to improve their profits. Many corporations (and local governments) spend as much time and energy devising ways to break unions as they do implementing policies to improve their workers' lot. Extrapolate such niggardliness to the global scene and you see how impossible it is to achieve peace and prosperity without repression and exploitation.

Socialism—at its best, a system designed to yield an equitable and decent standard of living, a peaceful environment and a just and humane society—can succeed precisely

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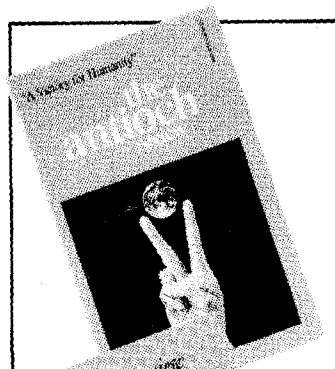

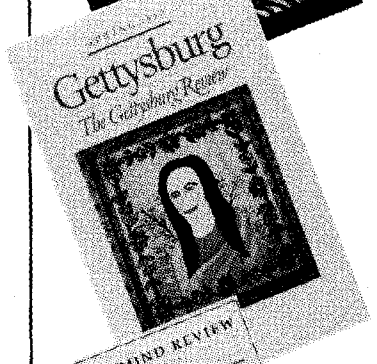


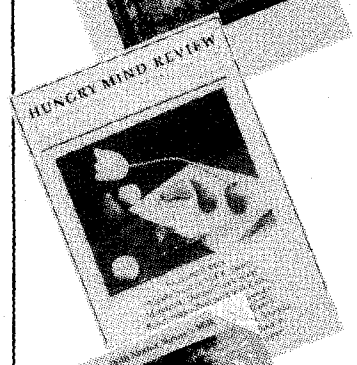


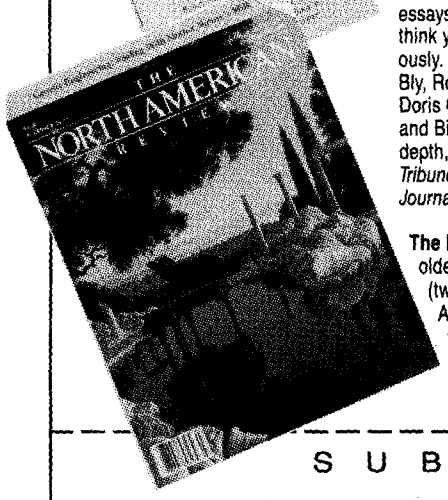


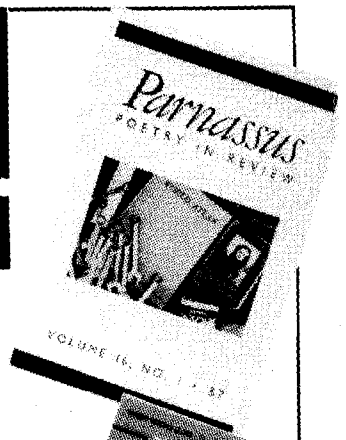


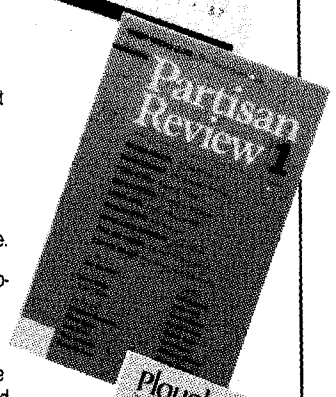

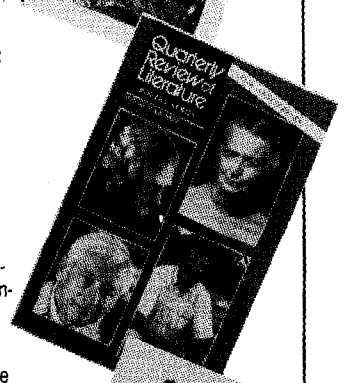

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because capitalism has so egregiously failed. As for America, its wars of recent years, from Southeast Asia to Central America to the Middle East, are as much "aberrations" as the L.A.P.D.'s assaults on passing motorists. There is no way to argue that the American dream is not built on aggression and intervention, or that the system is not predicated on exploitation by race and class and gender (at least).

Even if the wretched of the earth who had previously tried to oppose the masters of the world wanted to surrender, there would be no place to sign up for the new world order. Indeed, they would likely be mowed down as soon as they emerged with their white flags, like the Iraqi conscripts in full flight from Kuwait. Capitalism can't accommodate them. The only option is to fight for an alternative order.

It's time for left intellectuals to stop their defensive analyses of the fall of whatever-it-was in Central Europe and get on with the tougher strategic thinking about how the logical contradictions of whatever-it-is here in the West can be used for change. The right was allowed to set the terms of the fifteen-months' debate about the failure of socialism. The left must capture the debate about socialism's future.

At the outset, a few strategic guidelines should be followed. The most important rule is that struggles for socialism must originate, and be led, by those who need it most. It follows that the fiercest fights will continue to be in the old Third World. The fact that the left "lost" many of those campaigns in the past decade does not mean that the long contest to control the future is finished. Those losses have occurred both because of internal deficiencies of leadership and imagination and because of external forces beyond anyone's command. American military and economic pressure is an enormous problem, but not an insurmountable one. The collapse of the Soviet-bloc support system for Third World revolutions was a bad blow, but not a final one. For the fact is that the conditions that gave rise to the revolts will continue and will still produce the response of opposition. It may or may not be in familiar forms, such as "wars of liberation" or guerrillas swooping down from mountain redoubts on the capital, but suitable new forms will be found. We may not be marching anymore, but the dialectic keeps on keeping on.

At the same time, the socialist project in America and other hyperdeveloped countries must also be based in and led by the constituencies and classes that derive the least benefit from the system, and have the least invested in it. It's ridiculous to think that the Democratic Party, or any of its components or fellow travelers, can imagine a socialist future, let alone fight for one. That is not to say that electoral politics may not occasionally be useful. But as Pollin and Cockburn insisted, "The left must not be afraid to be socialist." It must not hide behind, and thus surrender to, liberal flummery that will ultimately preclude radical change rather than lead to it.

The natural left—as opposed to small groups of self-conscious leftists—comprises an overwhelming majority of the world's population. It can't be that this force has no power to change things for itself, and for the better. For too long, however, the "talking" leftists have been telling the natural left (what used to be called the "masses") what to do and how to do it. Worse, the leaders would tell the followers one thing (the "mass line") and tell one another something else. It was that which led to the deformations from Romania to China, some of which have been mercifully terminated.

So an ironclad rule should be, "No more lies." That not only means lies about the left's tactics, about secret systems of privilege and about the realities of failure. It is also an imperative to tell the truth about the system we oppose, about the way it co-opts and confuses us, about the benefits it brings to some of us, about our own investment in a capitalist future at the same time we chat about a socialist utopia.

There is no end to good ideas and good beginnings on the new road to socialism (Pollin and Cockburn talk about "socialization of the market," including investment, labor and information). It is crucial, however, that the trip start in those places where socialism is not simply a better plan but an absolute necessity. It is there that the will can be found, as well as the way. □

ALBANIAN ELECTION AFTERMATH

# Democracy's Race Against Fear

KENNETH ROTH

Fear was the true victor in Albania's first contested election under Communist rule. The two-thirds parliamentary majority amassed by the ruling Labor Party, as the Communists are called, reflected less an endorsement of President Ramiz Alia's incremental break with Stalinism than it did the Communists' continuing ability to frighten vast numbers of Albanians with the consequences of change.

I saw that fear in early March when I visited Albania for Helsinki Watch as part of the first nongovernmental human rights delegation ever received in that country. It was written on the faces of the young men in Durres harbor, whispering about the prospect of "civil war" as they waited for a chance to break through the lines of bayonet-equipped troops and jump on a boat for Italy. It was apparent in the eyes of student leaders debating whether to defy government orders not to demonstrate. And it was evident in the furtive glances of recently released prisoners, daring for the first time to speak with a Westerner but recalling all too vividly the spirit-crushing cruelty of the labor camp.

For a brief moment, in the giddy first days of Albania's aborted revolution, it appeared that fear might be overcome. Weakened by the Eastern European revolutions, quickening economic collapse and the spectacle of thousands of Albanians fleeing their homeland, the government capitulated when students took to the streets in December demanding multiparty elections.

The concession, for Albania, was extraordinary. This was the land where, until the thaw of recent months, religion

*Kenneth Roth is deputy director of Human Rights Watch.*

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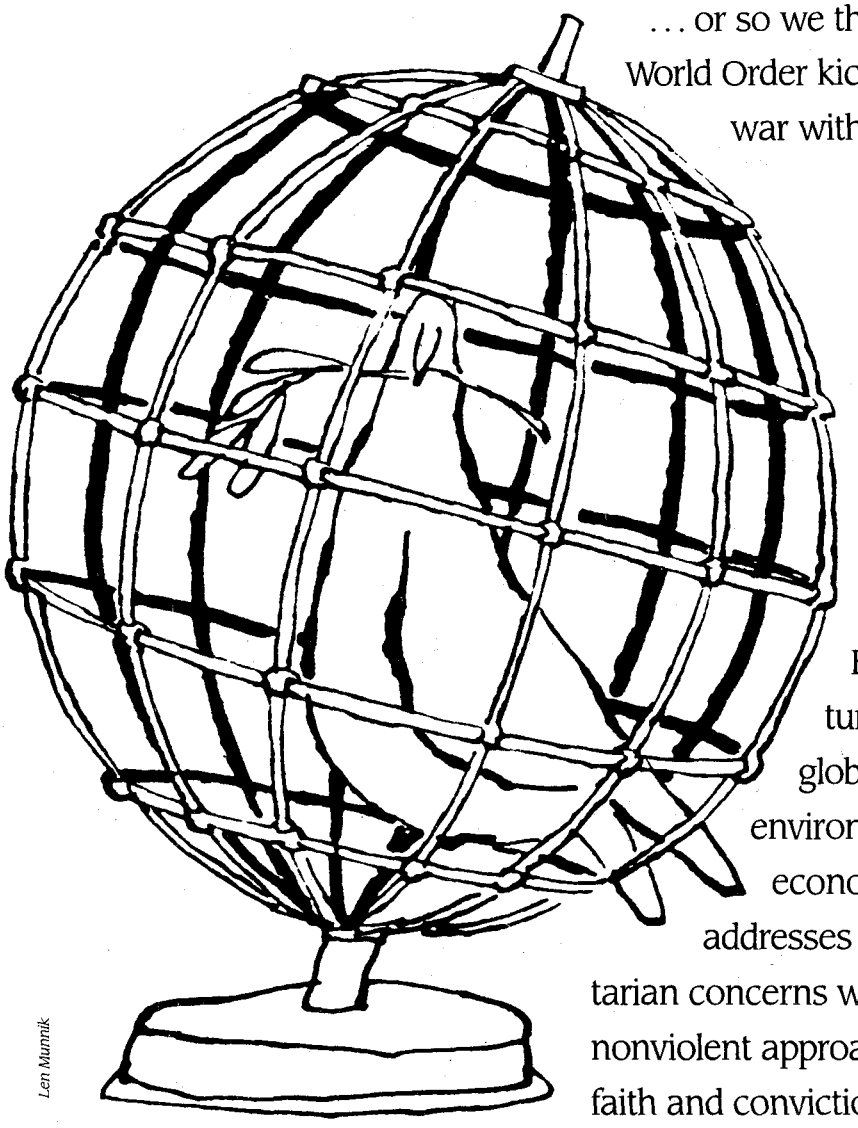

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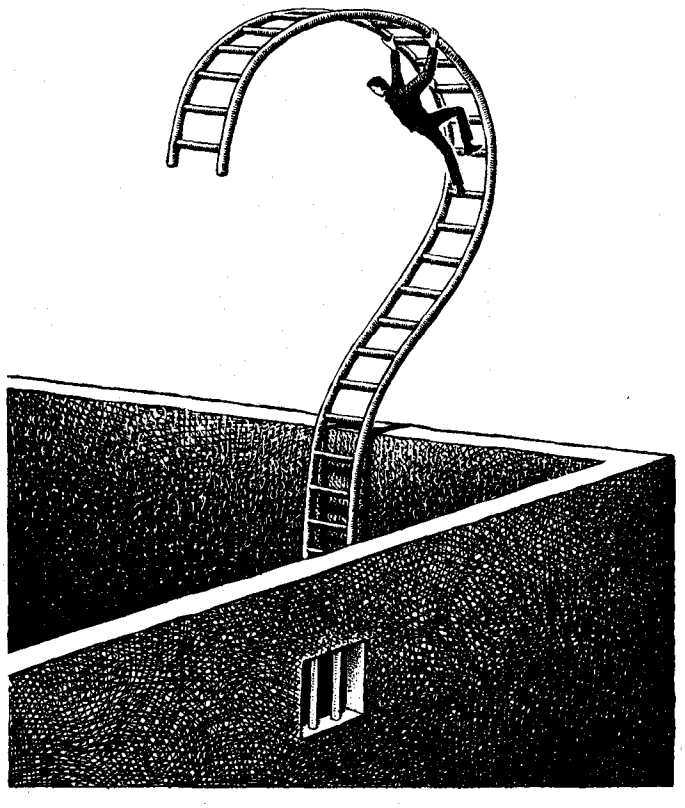
and lawyers were banned, private cars and foreign travel were available only to the privileged few and criticism of the government led to extended prison terms for antistate "agitation and propaganda."

Emboldened by the government's quick retreat, the students pressed on, attacking the sacred founder of the Communist state, Enver Hoxha, whose lifelong infatuation with Stalin kept Albania an isolated enclave of repression. On February 20 a student hunger strike inspired thousands of supporters to descend on the capital city of Tirana's central square and topple the huge bronze statue of Hoxha. It seemed a sign of the Communists' skin-deep support that the thirty-foot monument, erected upon Hoxha's death in 1985, turned out to be hollow and fell easily.

The rejoicing that followed proved premature. The desecration of this official icon set off a "strategy of terror," in the words of Sali Berisha, chair of the newly legalized Democratic Party, the leading opposition group. The government convened a series of pro-Hoxha rallies around the country, including one at Tirana's Military Academy, where army sharpshooters took potshots at pro-democracy protesters, killing four. Several others were murdered in the following days as loyalist troops vented their frustration on random victims.

The turmoil sparked a renewed exodus, the third since last July, this time with some 20,000 refugees hijacking every available seaworthy vessel to Italy. Deeply embarrassed, the government moved to stop the flow. However, hundreds of refugees who were crammed into one cruiser refused to disembark. After a tense three-day standoff in Durres harbor, the government launched a midnight raid. Baton-swinging soldiers bludgeoned those who resisted as some troops opened fire, leaving at least two dead and ten wounded.

Fear also struck the Labor Party. Staggered by the repeated displays of public discontent, the Communists retreated from view, apparently hoping to deprive the opposition of further rallying points for attack. They refused invitations to debate, allowed opposition leaders to run unopposed, forced all but two government ministers to resign, left campaign posters and literature in party warehouses and, with opposition consent, deferred the critical question of Hoxha's official status until after the election, which was held on March 31.



Still, the four-month-old Democratic Party faced an uphill battle trying to convince voters that change was possible. One difficulty was its mere skeleton of a program. Berisha, a cardiologist, outlined his party platform to me—legalization of private property, economic shock therapy and respect for human rights—but offered few details. A sturdy, powerful man with a winning grin that betrays a certain disbelief at his sudden prominence, Berisha was, in essence, asking Albanians to take a leap of faith.

Conveying even that simple message was not easy. Democratic Party activists at their modest headquarters in Tirana had just a handful of cars at their disposal to campaign in the rugged and often remote countryside. Their six-page newspaper, published semiweekly since January, was given sufficient newsprint to publish only 60,000 copies for a nation of 3.2 million. The national radio and television stations gave each opposition party a mere two hours and five minutes of air time to overcome the Labor Party's forty-six-year monopoly of the media.

In the end, the opposition's most effective campaign tool was the power of the crowd. In a series of impassioned demonstrations in Albania's major cities—Tirana, Shkoder, Durres, Kavaje and Elbasan—urban residents gained a sense of their strength in numbers. These same cities tilted decisively for the Democrats on Election Day. But outside urban areas, two-thirds of the country remained atomized, subject to threats and intimidation. There, the Communists prevailed.

For the moment, therefore, Albania's principal divide is not between Ghegs and Tosks or Muslims and Christians but between the city residents who have sampled freedom and rural dwellers who have not. But now, the student spearheads of what *Le Monde* dubbed the "nameless revolution" no longer have reason to heed the counsel of restraint issued by Democratic Party activists who feared providing a pretext for cancellation of the election. By the same token, those Communists prone to heavy-handed methods have every reason for renewed confidence in their tactics.

It was indicative of this increasing polarization that Albania's first postelection victim was 24-year-old Arben Broxi, a student and local Democratic leader in Shkoder, whom the police shot in the back while he was trying to calm demonstrators protesting the Communist victory. The enraged mob ransacked and burned the local Labor Party offices. Three more protesters were killed in the process, while Democratic Party offices and supporters came under attack in several other cities.

Whether Albania continues its gradual reform or explodes in violent conflict will depend in large part on President Alia. Sitting in the cathedral-like receiving room of the presidential palace, below a large white plaster bust of his patron,

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Hoxha, Alia recited to me in a two-hour interview a list of Communist accomplishments in education, health, employment and life expectancy. "That can't be done by the Holy Spirit alone," he boasted. Asked whether the Labor Party would relinquish power to a victorious opposition, he struck the pose of a committed democrat: "It hasn't been used to that, because it has always been first violin—sole violin—but if it must it will get used to being second violin, and it will be a good violinist!"

But beneath this veneer was a disquieting bitterness at his subjects' increasingly visible discontent with Communist rule. Attempting to rationalize the opposition's appeal, he spoke of a "collective psychosis," a national self-delusion that leads Albanians to "stand with crossed arms and open mouths waiting for others to feed them."

Alia himself was humiliated in the balloting, despite his party's victory. Although Albanians were not asked to vote for president, Alia ran for a parliamentary seat from a district in Tirana—selected, he explained, because of his "long-standing ties with the constituency's residents." Unimpressed, the voters delivered him a crushing defeat, electing in his stead an unknown geologist from the Democratic Party.

Under Albania's Constitution, Alia's failure to reach Parliament precludes him from being selected president. A proposed new Constitution, to be taken up by the incoming Parliament, would eliminate that requirement while adding provisions securing a range of fundamental freedoms. But the legitimacy of the new Parliament was called into question when the Democratic Party boycotted its first session, on April 15, because of the government's failure to name those responsible for the Shkoder killings. Even if the Democrats end the boycott, Alia will be in the embarrassing position of needing a constitutional amendment simply to stay in office.

In any event, Alia will remain first secretary of the Labor Party, which, despite deep divides, retains a commanding parliamentary bloc. But Alia's electoral misfortune was repeated on a larger scale nationwide: Many of the Labor Party's reformists ran in urban constituencies and lost. The new Parliament will thus be tilted in favor of pro-Hoxha hard-liners, who, to the dismay of many, will take up the deferred issue of Hoxha's crimes.

My most moving moments in Tirana came when I met some of Hoxha's victims—most just freed from prison and some awaiting release. A parade of gaunt figures told me of beatings during interrogation, trials without lawyers, prison terms of eight, ten, even twenty years and arduous labor in work camps. Their "crimes" included complaining about economic conditions, seeking to marry a French national, trying to flee the country, failing to deliver enough oil for export and writing poetry with "too free a hand."

Rehabilitation of these victims—acknowledging the wrongs they have suffered and allowing them to piece together what remains of their lives—is the foremost duty of Albania's new government. As one Roman Catholic priest said of the imprisonment of clerics, "If all the forests of Albania were made into paper and pencils, it wouldn't be enough to express our bitterness." Whether the government will begin to relieve that pain, whether it will permit all Albanians to conquer their fear, will be its ultimate test. □

# Tobacco

(*Continued From Front Cover*)

the plan stated. "We should therefore determine their attitude to smoking and health and how this might change over time." It was an opportunity Imperial seized. For example, the "Fiscal '80 Media Plans" for its Player's Filter brand divided one "target group," French-speaking men, into three age brackets. The first was 12 to 17. Twelve-year-old *men*? For Player's Light, the target group began with English-speaking men and women, ages 12 to 24, and French-speaking men and women from 12 to 17; for the du Maurier brand, the single target group was "Men & Women/12-34." Twelve-year-old *women*?

The documents seem to make it nearly impossible for Imperial to deny that it targeted children. But for a cigarette manufacturer to admit doing that would be nearly inconceivable—just imagine the consequences. Imperial's vice president of marketing, Donald Brown, was questioned by Imperial lawyer Simon Potter a week into the trial.

"Have you ever marketed your cigarettes or addressed your advertising to 12-year-olds?" Potter asked.

"No, we have not," Brown testified.

"To 13-year-olds?"

"No."

"To 14-year-olds?"

"No."

"To 15-year-olds?"

"No."

The "Player's Filter '81 Creative Guidelines" for advertisements said, "The activity shown should be one which is practiced by young people sixteen to twenty years old, or one that those people can reasonably aspire to in the near future." Note that the Imperial lawyer didn't question Brown about marketing to 16- and 17-year-olds.

Some of the cigarette company documents concerned two Imperial research projects, dubbed Huron and Erie, which in the early 1980s investigated the feasibility of mixing Canadian and American tobaccos for what became Player's Special Blend and Player's Special Blend Light. A Project Huron document reviewed for the government by Richard Pollay, an expert on cigarette advertising at the University of British Columbia, identified the target market bluntly enough: "principally young males 15-25."

Imperial's "Project 16" was an in-depth study of 16- and 17-year-olds to find out why they start to smoke and how they feel about being smokers. It was conducted in the fall of 1977 at hotels with, the study said, "closed circuit observation facilities in use for observers from Imperial Tobacco, McKim Advertising Limited, and Spitzer Mills and Bates [Imperial's ad agencies]."

*Morton Mintz, a retired* Washington Post *reporter, began covering tobacco issues in 1965.*

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"Serious efforts to learn to smoke occur between ages 12 and 13 in most cases," Project 16 found. "The adolescent seeks to display his new urge for independence with a symbol, and cigarettes are such a symbol. . . . However intriguing smoking was at 11, 12 or 13, by the age of 16 or 17 many regretted their use of cigarettes for health reasons and because they felt unable to stop smoking when they want to." In his analysis of this study, Pollay wrote, "Neither teachers nor health warnings inhibited" youngsters from starting to smoke. They perceived the health warning on cigarette packs "as an intrusion and sham."

## *Imperial: 'The industry is dominated by companies who respond most effectively to the needs of younger smokers.'*

While Project 16 was under way, Imperial was considering an obviously youth-oriented recommendation for advertising and promotion of one of its brands. "A combination of TV guides, Sports/Youth Publications, Posters and Beetleboards will be utilized to support Player's Filter in 1977/78," the recommendation said. "It is judged that these vehicles offer a more youthful approach to reach the younger smokers."

A later study done for Imperial, Project Plus/Minus, concluded that young starting smokers "no longer disbelieve the dangers of smoking, but they almost universally assume these risks will not apply to themselves because they will not become addicted. Once addiction does take place, it becomes necessary for the smoker to make peace with the accepted hazards. . . . The desire to quit seems to come earlier now than before, even prior to the end of high school. . . . However, the desire to quit, and actually carrying it out, are two quite different things, as the would-be quitter soon learns."

"If the last ten years have taught us anything," Imperial stated in its marketing plan for fiscal 1988, which is marked "Personal and Confidential" on every page, "it is that *the industry is dominated by the companies who respond most effectively to the needs of younger smokers.*" [Emphasis in original.]

Imperial learned this lesson well. The proof is its "Continual Market Assessment," an extremely large survey of smoking attitudes and practices that covered more than 211,000 Canadians and that was conducted continuously over a thirteen-year period. Analyzing the results for the government, Dr. Jeffrey Harris, a physician and health economist who teaches at Harvard Medical School and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, reported: "The CMA data indicate that successive cohorts of young, predominantly teenage cigarette smokers have been attracted to the Player's and du Maurier brand names. Imperial's rising dominance of the Canadian cigarette market over the last two decades can be attributed entirely to its rising shares among these new smokers, who are now aged 15-34 years." And, he said, "the best available explanation for Imperial Tobacco's recent success in the young smoker's market is its long-standing sponsorship of sports events." It's good news that last month Dr. Louis Sullivan, the U.S. Secretary of Health and Human Services, urged tobacco companies to end their sponsorship of sporting events and also urged citizens to boycott sports events sponsored by the industry.

The Canadian story is pretty much the global story: Preadolescents and adolescents everywhere are essential industry fodder. They must replace the estimated 3 million adults throughout the world who will die of cigarette-caused diseases each year in the 1990s, and they must replace the smokers who quit. Evidence introduced in the Montreal trial showed that 41 percent of current smokers had made at least one unsuccessful attempt to quit, and about 8 percent of the would-be quitters succeeded. Such figures reveal the inescapable economic imperative of the cigarette industry: To replace the quitters, and to reinforce the habit and its social acceptability among present smokers, it *must* try to recruit nonsmokers, including children.

For U.S. tobacco companies, the youth market is a significant, albeit small, share of the total. In 1988 alone, American children under 18 spent $1.26 billion for a billion packs of cigarettes and 26 million containers of smokeless tobacco (snuff). The profit for manufacturers was $221 million. Those careful estimates were reported in May 1990 by Dr. Joseph DiFranza, a director of an aggressive nonprofit organization based in Springfield, Massachusetts, called Stop Teenage Addiction to Tobacco, and Joe Tye, president of STAT, in the *Journal of the American Medical Association.*

DiFranza and Tye calculated that more than 3 million youngsters are daily smokers, and that nearly 3 million more are "experimenters at high risk of becoming addicted." Every year, approximately 2 million American minors start to smoke. Their average age is 13. Of those aged 13 to 17, a December 1988 government survey showed, 13 percent were regular smokers—up three points over the previous year.

By the mid-1990s, the percentage of women who smoke is expected to exceed that of men who smoke. The explanation is not only that more girls than boys have taken up the habit in the past decade but also that fewer girls quit, says Dr. Michele Bloch of the Advocacy Institute, a leading foe of the industry. "The targeting of girls and women is made easier by the fact that smoking artificially and temporarily holds down body weight," Bloch told me. "Societal pressure for girls and women to be slender is intense. Weight control is one of the most important reasons girls start smoking, and one of the biggest barriers preventing them from quitting. Given adolescents' fixation on body image and the low self-esteem of adolescent girls, what more could cigarette manufacturers ask for?"

Last December The Tobacco Institute, the industry lobby in Washington, announced a $10 million public relations campaign as its "contribution" to efforts to discourage smoking by minors. For example, it pledged to support a national legal smoking age of 18, to "work with retailers across the coun-

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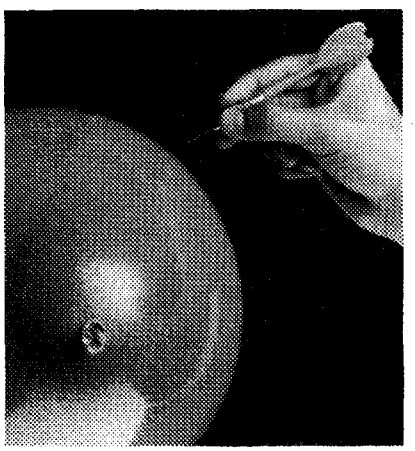

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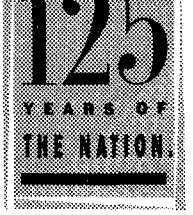


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try for strict enforcement of state laws prohibiting the sale of cigarettes to minors" and to have posted "wherever cigarettes are sold" a sign warning, "IT'S THE LAW/WE DO NOT SELL TOBACCO PRODUCTS TO PERSONS UNDER 18."

The Advocacy Institute points out, however, that the industry could have put up more than twenty times $10 million before spending as much on the P.R. campaign as it reaps in annual profits from sales to children. "More importantly," it adds, "today's young smokers are tomorrow's adult addicts; about 52 percent of smokers begin by age 18, and 90 percent by age 21. In this sense, they are perhaps the cigarette industry's most important customers." Of the nearly 435,000 Americans killed by smoking-induced diseases in 1988 alone, about half were among the "most important customers"—they had started smoking by age 13. One-quarter had started by age 11.

Industry techniques for targeting children are regularly chronicled and comprehensively exposed in *Tobacco and Youth Reporter* (*T.Y.R.*), a quarterly published by STAT. Starting with its first issue in 1986, for example, *T.Y.R.* has been covering the story of paid cigarette advertising in movies. This is important if only because teenagers are three times as likely as adults to be frequent moviegoers. *T.Y.R.*'s Winter 1988 issue identified eighteen films containing scenes that, STAT had reason to believe, resulted from hidden payments made by tobacco companies to promote smoking covertly to young audiences (*T.Y.R.* has identified many more such films since). The Summer 1986 issue revealed that R.J. Reynolds Tobacco Company was paying all the bills for *Moviegoer*, although it was disguised as an independent magazine.

"This slick publication was given away free at movie theaters around the country," *T.Y.R.* said. "Each issue of the 24-page magazine included five full pages of advertising for Camel and Salem cigarettes; there were no other ads. . . . The purpose of *Moviegoer* was to allow R.J. Reynolds to reach these impressionable kids in the location where they were already most prepared to suspend beliefs and value judgments." After *T.Y.R.* blew the whistle, Reynolds killed *Moviegoer*, but it was followed by *Movies USA*, which also targets Reynolds brands at "youthful" and "image conscious" audiences, and which is also distributed free in thousands of theaters.

Tobacco sales to minors are illegal in forty-four states. Yet STAT's nationwide surveys of stores selling cigarettes over the counter have shown that three out of four, on average, sell them to children as young as 11. In some cities, including Baltimore and Brookline and Lawrence, Massachusetts, children under 18 were able to buy cigarettes in 100 percent of the stores they tested, *T.Y.R.* reported in its Autumn 1989 issue. Moreover, vending machines dispense cigarettes to an estimated 450,000 children every day. Children could buy cigarettes in 100 percent of the vending machines they tried in Santa Clara County, California; Colorado; the Washington, D.C., metropolitan area; and New Brunswick, New Jersey, *T.Y.R.* added.

If more evidence is needed to prove that Reynolds targets children, it was provided in a "Very Important" letter that J.P. McMahon, a division manager in Sarasota, Florida, for RJR Sales Company, the tobacco distributor for RJR Nabisco, sent to his employees in January 1990 (the letter was acquired by STAT). He urged them to identify convenience stores patronized by young people, including those "in close proximity to colleges, *high schools*, or areas where there are a large number of young adults [who] frequent the store[s]. The purpose of this exercise," he continued, "is to be able to identify those stores . . . where we would try to keep premium items . . . at all times." [Emphasis added.] "Young adults" is a code phrase for young people including those under 18; "premiums" are defined by STAT as the gifts that the nicotine companies give to reward the purchase of cigarettes. An RJR spokeswoman told *The Wall Street Journal* that the memo violated company policy and was a "mistake" that was corrected within forty-eight hours.

RJR Nabisco markets Camels with an advertising and promotional campaign featuring "Old Joe," a cartoon character, and a "Smooth Character" tag line. One ad is a foldout poster featuring the cartoon camel. Purportedly to make the poster "suitable for framing," the mandatory health warning, a coupon for a free pack of Camels and an offer for additional posters are all easily detachable. The ad appeared in magazines with large teenage readership, including *National Lampoon*, *Rolling Stone* and *Sports Illustrated*. The choice of such youth-oriented publications angers Mark Green, New York City's Consumer Affairs Commissioner. "Who puts posters up on their walls—children or adults?" Green asks. "Who watches and talks about cartoon characters—children or adults? Who is impressionable enough to link smoking and success or sex—children or adults?"

Green petitioned the Federal Trade Commission, which has exclusive jurisdiction over tobacco advertising, to declare the use of cartoon characters to sell cigarettes an "unfair" or "deceptive" trade practice and to issue a cease-and-desist order. He filed the petition in May 1990. The F.T.C. was still

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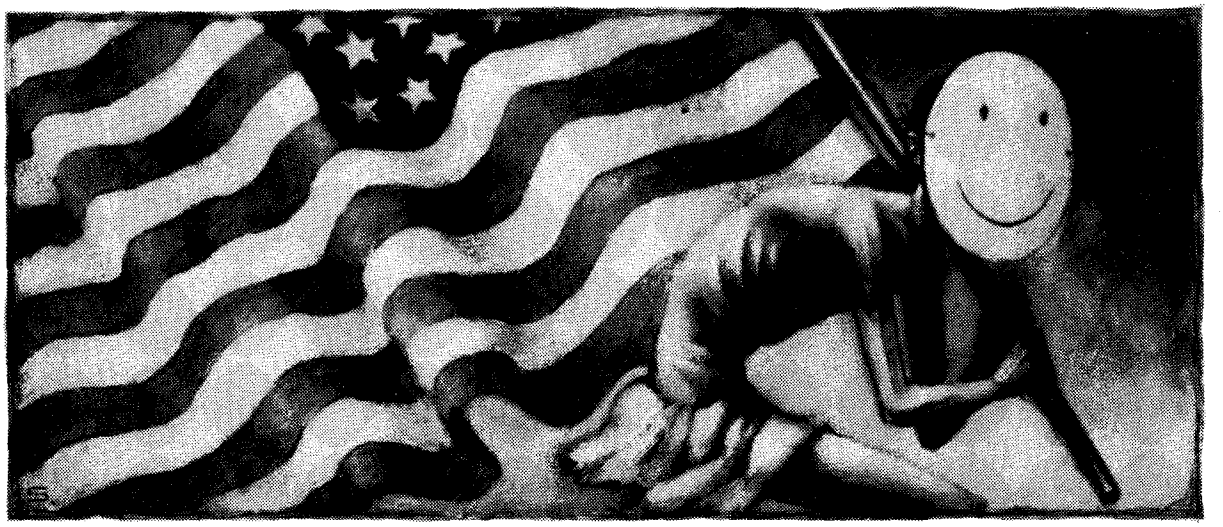

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sitting on it ten months later. "I've heard nothing," Green said in April.

In July 1990 Philip Morris announced a crackdown on unlicensed use of its cigarette logos, or of close imitations, on children's items such as games, toys and candy. In lawyers', journalists' and other publications, the giant tobacco conglomerate ran full-page ads showing its family of brand names and warning in bold, black print, "If You Use These Trademarks, We'll See You In Court!" The brief explanation said that "Philip Morris U.S.A. does not want children to smoke because smoking is an adult choice." Nothing had stopped Philip Morris from cracking down years ago. Because the company didn't, "the assumption was that Philip Morris pushed its cigarettes to kids," Michael Pertschuk, co-director of the Advocacy Institute (and editorial board member of *The Nation*), told *The Wall Street Journal*. "Whether or not that's true, it's a cheap public relations shot for Philip Morris to cross their hearts and swear they never intended to do any such thing."

Dr. Alan Blum, a leading antitobacco activist and founder of DOC (Doctors Ought to Care), asked, "Are they going to go after Shea Stadium and all the other places where they pay good money to put their logos?" He was referring, of course, to the lethality—particularly for minors—of linking the use of tobacco with sports, star athletes and entertainers, and to the hypocrisy of industry denials of such linkage.

The lethality and hypocrisy were memorably illustrated by the story of an Oklahoma boy, Sean Marsee. Like many professional baseball players, Sean used cancer-causing smokeless tobacco. He was a closet "snuff dipper" at 12 (his mother said he had been given free samples at a rodeo) and became addicted or habituated to United States Tobacco Company's popular Copenhagen brand. In high school, where he fulfilled his ambition to become a medal-winning track star, he didn't particularly worry about his habit, figuring that the snuff couldn't harm his lungs as cigarettes would. In 1983, when he was 18, he developed cancer in the middle third of his tongue, near the groove on the right side of his mouth where he had kept his quid of Copenhagen. After three rounds of mutilating surgery he died in February 1984, when he was 19.

Sean's mother filed a lawsuit, ultimately unsuccessful, against United States Tobacco. Under "written policies dating way back into the 1930s," Louis Bantle, the company's chair and chief executive officer, swore in a deposition, "We never have—and never will—market tobacco to persons under 18." This testimony should be laid alongside his sales pitch at a company meeting in 1968, when he was vice president for marketing. "We must sell the use of tobacco in the mouth and appeal to young people," the minutes quote Bantle as saying. "We hope to start a fad." He did not dispute the quote when confronted with it in a deposition taken by plaintiff's lawyer George Braly. Bantle's pitch to boys succeeded just fine. "We've gotten excellent growth from young people," he told the *Chicago Tribune* in 1977. "In Texas today, a kid wouldn't dare to go to school, even if he doesn't use the product, without a can in his Levi's." It's no wonder, then, that in 1986 a Senate committee report on snuff warned of "the alarming use by children," including 20 percent of Louisiana white boys between 8 (!) and 17.

The widely publicized Sean Marsee story led to a slump in snuff sales—briefly. By May 1990, *The Wall Street Journal* was reporting that while cigarette sales were declining, "the snuff business is booming," thanks in good measure to United States Tobacco's "aggressive marketing tactics." "Aggressive" translates to heartless and lushly profitable. In 1989, the *Journal* reported, the "Greenwich, Conn., company's net margin neared 28%, making it one of the nation's most profitable industrial companies—and more than three times as profitable as Philip Morris Cos."

Preposterous defenses of industry conduct didn't impress the National Commission on Drug-Free Schools, a twenty-six-member panel created by Congress. "The alcohol and tobacco industries often target those under the legal drinking and smoking ages with highly attractive and persuasive promotion techniques," the commission said in its final report last November. Commission member Michael DeWine, a Republican Representative from Ohio, was quoted by United Press International as saying that "some members wanted to go all the way and say that advertising ought to be banned."

Advertising and promotion to children have been alarmingly successful almost everywhere [see Alexander Cockburn, "Beat the Devil," October 30, 1989]. A Kenyan physician told an American Cancer Society meeting in January 1990 that in East Africa in 1979 about 10 percent of primary-school children smoked; in 1989, about 40 percent did. In the Philippines, according to the World Health Organization, 17 percent of boys in the 11-16 age range smoke regularly.

Magazine ads for two French brands in French-speaking Africa ooze a subtle message to young blacks aspiring to acceptance by white society. In Cameroon, the scene in an ad for Bastos Blonde is an elegant grass tennis court. The players chatting at the net are a blond white teenager who looks to be 16, at most, and a similarly young black. In the Ivory Coast, an ad for Gauloises shows two young motorcyclists, one white, one black, enjoying a relaxing moment together on the beach. In both ads, the white expresses his "friendship" with the black by offering him a cigarette.

Until recently, Thailand had prohibited importation of foreign cigarettes and outlawed all cigarette advertising and promotion. But U.S. brands were smuggled in, and Lark, Marlboro and Winston logos were on T-shirts, shorts, towels, earrings, chewing gum—even the covers of children's school notebooks. Last May Dr. Prakit Vateesatokit, leader of the Thai Anti-Smoking Campaign Project, displayed a kite bearing the Winston logo at a hearing held by Senator Edward Kennedy. The kite is "for children," and its purpose is to addict them, he said. "There is no adult in Thailand who plays with this kind of kite." And no adult anywhere should believe the industry doesn't target children. □

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# BOOKS & THE ARTS.

## Babes in Boyland

PATRICIA HART

THE YOUNGEST DOLL. *By Rosario Ferré. University of Nebraska. 169 pp. $29.95. Paper $10.95.*

WOMAN HOLLERING CREEK AND OTHER STORIES. *By Sandra Cisneros. Random House. 165 pp. $18.*

Defiant magic feminism challenges all our conventional notions of time, place, matter and identity in Rosario Ferré's spectacular new book, *The Youngest Doll*, first published in Spanish in 1976 as *Papeles de Pandora* and now deftly translated into English primarily by the author herself. Magic realism electro-charged with feminist awareness fuels a constellation of Latin American writers I call the magic feminists—luminaries like Isabel Allende, Luisa Valenzuela and Clarice Lispector, in addition to Ferré. Latin America's male magic realists have long juxtaposed the impossible with the quotidian, so what sets these women apart is their feminist view of what we can and should call real.

A couple of quick comparisons will demonstrate the difference between classic male magic realists and Rosario Ferré's magic feminism. In Mario Vargas Llosa's *Pantaleón and the Visitors*, a lowly army official with a chameleon personality is transformed into Super Pimp when ordered to organize a string of prostitutes to service horny soldiers in remote outposts of the Peruvian jungle. The wit and style with which the fable is spun make us guffaw, but if our consciousness is higher than waist level, in some part of our minds we suspect that being an army whore may not be all that funny in real life. Rosario Ferré (who studied with Vargas Llosa at the University of Puerto Rico) uses like magic to confuse the identities of a notorious prostitute and a society woman in the story "When Women Love Men," but the difference is that she respects both and convinces us that she really knows how each thinks. Is it "Isabel the Rumba, Macumba . . . swaying her okra hips through the sun-swilled Antillean streets, her grapefruit tits sliced open on her chest," or is it Isabel Luberza, clinging to her husband's arm "like a jasmine vine to the wall"? Here is a story where we readers can savor a marvelous melting of identity, perhaps suspending some disbelief but not locking our whole hard-won ethical system in the basement for the duration of the tale.

In "The Poisoned Story," Ferré uses a conceit made world-famous by Julio Cortázar in "Continuity of Parks." In both a reader picks up a text that tells in circular fashion of his or her own murder. For Cortázar the trick makes of the text an impossible object—a fascinating curiosity. But in Ferré, the woman reader is poisoned by the ink of a book of fairy tales, and by the time she dies we know that her life is a fairy tale gone wrong. A proletarian Cinderella (who married an impoverished sugarcane plantation owner only to metamorphose into the wicked stepmother to his daughter) is poisoned by the patriarchal fantasies she swallowed when young. Like certain Escher prints, both stories seem to be drawing themselves, but while for Cortázar the trick is neat sleight-of-hand, for Ferré it can stand for the way female readers are so often poisoned by the trash they read as girls.

*She refines the foil of her tongue so that it might pierce the reader's heart.*

As the daughter of a former governor of Puerto Rico, Ferré has had a bird's-eye view of the ravages of power on her island, and her magic touches often spark eruptions of repressed anger in the face of just such power. From the title story, in which a mild-mannered maiden aunt takes chillingly unexpected revenge on her oppressors through toy-making, dolls are a constant motif when victims become angry. Dolls here do not stand for the infantilization of women in "polite" Puerto Rican circles; they *are* that warping of the girl-child's potential into convenient little totemic packages. In "The Youngest Doll," a pompous doctor is horrified to discover that his wife has run off and left in her place a life-sized doll whose eyes are filled with frenzied crustaceans—and that for years he has failed to notice! In "Amalia," a girl whose skin is deathly sensitive to sun becomes her wax doll, melting horribly in the heat of the garden when she tries to escape the stifling confinement of the bourgeois household. Later, a bored society woman in "Marina and the Lion" has herself delivered to a costume ball as a princess doll in a cellophane-wrapped box. Cutting through the "transparent skin" of cellophane with her fan, Marina flees the doll box into her vacuous party, but the confinement of her social station can only be escaped at the end of the story through death.

At a moment when it often seems the Academic Literary Critic begins every article reciting a rosary of sacred names and then lumbers on, larded with jargon, to insist that he or she is actually far more interesting than the author being dissected, it is reassuring to see two essays of Ferré's at the end of this book, demonstrating that art and appreciation need not be eternally at war. In "How I Wrote 'When Women Love Men,' " Ferré gives a succinct account of Latina and Anglo feminists who helped shape her ideas, along with glimpses of her sources of inspiration. "There is a . . . type of irony, which consists mainly in the art of dissembling anger, of refining the foil of the tongue to the point that it can more accurately pierce the reader's heart," she tells us in her essay, after having amply shown us in her fiction. In "On Destiny, Language, and Translation; or, Ophelia Adrift in the C. &. O. Canal," Ferré sets forth brilliantly the forces that tug her in opposite directions as a Latina living now in the United States, and as a Puerto Rican writer torn between "a constant re-creation of divergent worlds, which often tend to appear greener on the other side." Translating her own works "can be diabolic and obsessive," she allows, and she admits, "It is one of the few instances when one can be dishonest and feel good about it." She proves the point by translating a wicked Puerto Rican pun, *Tenemos mucho oro, del que cagó el loro*, as "We have a lot of gold, of the kind the parrot pukes." Ferré clearly knows that *cagar* means "to shit," not "to puke,"

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and that *cagó* is the past tense, but as her own translator she is free to put sonorous repetition of "p's" and a sense of immediacy above literal accuracy. Thus, in this and in dozens of cases, her translations reinvent her texts and achieve a kind of brilliance few non-authors would be arrogant enough to dare.

From beginning to end, then, whether she is conceiving stories, translating them or providing commentary, Rosario Ferré shines, and it is high time for English-speaking readers to bask in her light.

The wrenching pull of competing cultures and languages is just as important in Mexican-American Sandra Cisneros's art as it is in Rosario Ferré's. Anger repressed bursts the seams of life for Cisneros's female characters, who struggle valiantly to make something beautiful from the ugly fabric fate has given them to work with. Cisneros's first book of fiction, *The House on Mango Street* (1984), was a collection of prose-poem reflections on a girlhood in which creative talent fought to survive a hostile environment, sensitive memories set down as a graduate of the Iowa Writers' Workshop and winner of a National Endowment for the Arts fellowship. In her new book, *Woman Hollering Creek and Other Stories*, Cisneros breathes narrative life into her adroit, poetic descriptions, making them mature, fully formed works of fiction. Her range of characters is broad and lively, from Rudy Cantú, drag queen par excellence, in whose ears the crowd's applause sizzles like when "my ma added the rice to the hot oil"; to the disembodied spirit of Emiliano Zapata's wife; to a teenage girl who returns to the shrine of the Virgen de los Lagos to ask Mary to take back the boyfriend the girl previously prayed for.

Calques and puns are hidden throughout like toy surprises that double the pleasure of the bilingual reader. The title story, "Woman Hollering Creek," is an impish, literal translation of Arroyo la Gritona, a creek whose name sounds as though it may have been derived from La Llorona, the weeping woman of Mexican folklore—part Circe, part Magdalene. The irony is that the main character, a young bride brought across the border from Mexico only to be abused, begins the tale crying over her plight, but in the end escapes the stereotyped role of tearful victim through the help of strong, independent Felice, who hollers in exhilaration like Tarzan as the pair cross the river to freedom.

In "Bien Pretty," the last story in the collection, Cisneros beautifully draws the struggle of a talented but underappreciated Chicana painter to connect culturally and sexually with men who circle and abandon her, a situation she survives nobly, "in my garage making art." The men who know her language and folklore may disappoint, but as painter she transforms one bug-exterminating lover into volcanic Prince Popocatépetl, and on her canvas, as in Cisneros's fiction, the results are at once dramatically specific and universal.

If superstition is the opiate of Latin America's desperate poor, it is no surprise that Rosario Ferré's ire flowers into magic feminism. By contrast, the toughness that Sandra Cisneros's characters need to survive U.S. streets makes hard-eyed realism her ideal mode. The catalysts are remarkably similar for the two, but the resulting chain reactions of rage delight with a clear chemical difference. □

# Machine Dreams

GENE SANTORO

THE DIFFERENCE ENGINE. *By William Gibson and Bruce Sterling. Bantam/Spectra. 429 pp. $19.95.*

In the 1830s, Charles Babbage, an English mathematician, conceived of a mechanical computer that he called an analytical engine. He was far from the first to invent a mechanical calculator; among his illustrious predecessors was Blaise Pascal. But Babbage's engine was the first that could perform complex operations by following sequential instructions on punch cards—what's called "conditional branching." The era's technology was too coarse to manufacture the finely machined parts such a device would require, and so it languished, a road not taken. That is, until the punningly titled *The Difference Engine*, cowritten by cyberpunk wizards William Gibson (author of *Neuromancer, Count Zero* and *Mona Lisa Overdrive*) and Bruce Sterling (best known for *Schismatrix* and *Islands in the Net*). The novel folds Steam Punk, a sci-fi style that deals in Victorian-era technofantasies, into the duo's cybernetic preoccupations. Set primarily in 1855 London, it imagines an alternative history in which Babbage's analytical machine has become the cornerstone of a new order.

In *The Difference Engine*'s world, Babbage's brainchild leads to political and social revolution and diverts technology to alternate lines of development. Steam-powered gurneys chuff along the streets of this book's London while steam-powered subways course below them. Clothes not for the savants (as the learned aristocracy is known) or the industrial rich are cut according to stylized engine patterns. "Kinotroping" runs moving cards that project changing images, which depend for their speed, and thus their appeal and realism, on the skill of the "clackers," as the kinotropists are known. One of the foremost clackers is a onetime medical student named John Keats. Disraeli appears as a novelist/journalist. The Prime Minister and leader of the ruling Industrial Radical Party is Lord Byron, whose daughter Ada, the Queen of Engines, is at the heart of the novel's fierce dark-lantern plotting. (The historical Lady Byron, sometimes called the world's first programmer, developed a program for Babbage's machine to calculate the complex sequence called Bernoulli numbers.)

The British dominate world politics and economics. "America" is fragmented into the U.S.A., the C.S.A., the Republic of Texas, the Republic of California, unorganized territory (the Midwest) and the Manhattan Commune, founded by German émigré Karl Marx during the anti-draft uprisings of the Civil War. The French Empire rules Mexico and the Southwest. The Russian Empire claims Alaska. Implementing its balance-of-powers theory, Britain keeps them all at odds via labyrinthine stratagems that are increasingly engine-driven.

Only France, with its Grand Napoleon Engine—a Babbage machine with a hundred-plus miles of gearworks, almost double the capacity of the fearsome British Central Statistics Bureau—can rival Britain's control of its people. That's because only those two allied nations can track their populations from cradle to grave via an assigned number. Sound familiar? In *The Difference Engine*'s alternative history, the postindustrial growth of the nation-state leads to covert totalitarian government nested within a liberal shell no matter what path technology takes. After all, who besides governments and their corporate underwriters can afford the expensive machinery? The underlying lesson is classic cyberpunk: Scientific humanity creates technology,

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which then determines everything from the models used to understand human nature (cybernetics as the paradigm for the brain's functions, for instance) to social organization and controls. Because technology intensifies the authority of those who can buy it, its development is inevitably channeled into heightened repression. Only on the margins is a relatively free life possible.

So, the plots of *The Difference Engine* revolve around a typical cyberpunk confluence—sex, money, the dark-side powers of technology, doses of mysticism and their overall usefulness to the corporate state—translated into a black comedy blend of fact and fantasy suitable for Dickens's nineteenth century. Take Lady Ada Byron, a mostly offstage presence who connects the narrative strands. A brilliant mathematician now past her intellectual prime, she's also promiscuous and deeply caught up in gambling debts and blackmail. Lady Ada's major discovery, encoded on a series of odd engine cards, is called the Modus, and is actually a version of Gödel's Theorem. As she explains it, "The execution of the so-called Modus Program demonstrated that any formal system must be both *incomplete* and *unable to establish its own consistency*. . . . The *transfinite* nature of the Byron Conjectures were the ruination of the Grand Napoleon; the Modus Program initiated a series of nested loops, which, though difficult to establish, were yet more difficult to extinguish. The program ran, yet rendered its Engine useless!"

Lady Ada and her underworld confederates/blackmailers had wanted to use Modus as a gambling system. But in *The Difference Engine* it also stands as the post-Gödel, post-Heisenberg overarching metaphor for human attempts at totalizing systems—political or mathematical or fictional—that inevitably spin out of control. Think of the book as a picaresque dystopia where the protagonists battle apparent evils they only think they understand to produce outcomes they haven't chosen. The search for the Modus, which gets stolen, passed around, hidden, and finally uncovered and confiscated by the ever-growing British secret police, is the twisted spine of the novel's complex tale.

Laurence Oliphant, head of Britain's secret police, sends the savant Edward "Leviathan" Mallory (who has been given the Modus cards by Lady Ada) to the Central Statistics Bureau. There, his contact Wakefield, the chief clerk of the Quantitative Criminology section, regularly runs cards on the bureau's huge engines to ferret out information the secret policeman and his bosses need. For Oliphant has a plan for how to use statistics and the huge engines: " 'Mightn't we examine society, sir, with a wholly novel precision and intensity? . . . Topics we now vaguely call police matters, health matters, public services—but perceived, sir, as by an all-searching, all-pervasive, a scientific eye!' " That strikes the square-rigged Mallory as "a Utopian fantasy." But Wakefield explains, " 'In theory, sir . . . it is entirely possible. We naturally keep a brotherly eye on the telegram-traffic, credit-records, and such.' " Or, as Wakefield's assistant notes with less bureaucratic gentility, " 'We have everyone in Britain in our records. Everyone who's ever applied for work, or paid taxes, or been arrested.' "

The plot ratchets into high gear from there on. A thick atmospheric inversion, The Stink, finds London breaking out into a plague of looting and rioting as everyone but the poorest citizens flees for the countryside. In an extended set piece that lovingly parodies the British tradition of the derring-do amateur, Mallory takes on a Marxist/anarchist band of ragtag revolutionaries at their dockside warehouse headquarters, aided only by three others.

Oliphant himself straddles the poetic and the scientific realms, one of the fault lines in *The Difference Engine* demonstrated by the relationship between the always offstage Lords Babbage and Byron. At Byron's funeral his widow, the ironically named Iron Lady, bitterly recalls that she was the true if secret engine behind the party's success. It was she who linked Babbage and Byron with their mutually exclusive talents, matching the impractical and impolitic scientist with the passionate but hollow orator. It was also she who read the covert reports and signed death sentences, vindicating herself by bloody accounts: " 'Was not every civil evil we committed repaid, repaid ten-fold; for the public good?' "

Oliphant is made of less inflexible stuff. Like Coleridge (at whose American Susquehanna Phalanstery he finishes out his days in pursuit of utopian ideals) or Emerson, he too dreams of the all-seeing Eye the widowed Iron Lady invokes. But this engine-driven Eye's focus doesn't seem to be the illumination Oliphant had in mind when he began.

After an abortive attempt to steal the


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Modus, one of Oliphant's agents is snatched, continuing the ongoing daisy chain of covert activities. A sickened Oliphant says to Wakefield, " 'The level of violence in this society . . . or rather, I should say, the level of *unacknowledged* violence, has become remarkable, don't you think, Andrew?' . . . 'They'll erase us,' Wakefield said. 'We'll cease to exist. There'll be nothing left, nothing to prove either of us ever lived. Not a check-stub, not a mortgage in a City bank, nothing whatever.' 'Exactly what I'm on about, Andrew.' 'Don't take that moral tone with me, sir,' Wakefield said. '*Your* lot began it, Oliphant—the disappearances, the files gone missing, the names expunged, numbers lost, histories edited to suit specific ends. . . . No, don't take that tone with me.' "

Oliphant could think of no reply—and in such a world, his silence may be the beginning of wisdom. We have seen the engine, and it is us. □

# ART.

ARTHUR C. DANTO

**Liubov Popova**

In the catalogue for the posthumous exhibition of the work of Liubov Popova held in Moscow in 1924, six months after she died of scarlet fever at the age of 35, the artist is cited thus: "No artistic success has given me as much satisfaction as the sight of a peasant or a worker buying a length of material designed by me." This is the summary manifesto of an artistic revolutionist, and it condenses a transvaluation of artistic values that the retrospective of 1924 must have embodied, consisting as it did of seventy-odd paintings (which represented artistic success as Popova construed it before the Russian Revolution) and also some textile designs, a few book covers and some posters (which defined artistic success in the postrevolutionary era in which Popova played an exemplary role).

The syntax of the exhibition of Popova's work on view at the Museum of Modern Art in New York until April 23 (which travels to the Los Angeles County Museum from June 19 to August 18) must be very like that of the Moscow show of 1924. It is essential to recognize, in viewing it, that the later work, from about 1921 until the artist's abrupt death, is not simply what follows, chronologically, the earlier work but what represents the impact upon this artist's life of one of the major historical events of this century. The later pieces—decorative and utilitarian—represent her response to that cataclysmic intervention. What is striking is the way in which Popova applied what she had appreciated and absorbed as a modernist painter who had worked through the sequence of avant-garde movements available to Russian artists in the prerevolutionary years of the century—Cubism, Futurism, Cubo-Futurism, Suprematism—to projects she might in those earlier years have dismissed merely as applied art. What is ironic is that Popova came truly into her own as a designer, and that the Revolution enabled her to become what she essentially was as an artist. Popova was the daughter of a high bourgeois family—privileged, educated, well traveled and, on the testimony of Rodchenko, who knew her in those earlier years, snooty. She was a strong painter but not an especially original one. She would certainly have disdained as being of lesser artistic moment what, when she internalized the aesthetic imperatives of the Revolution as she and so many of her artistic comrades understood them, she executed so brilliantly and finally with such originality.

The Institute of Artistic Culture (Inkhuk) was established in 1920 as the official body charged with formulating what the task of artists was to be in a Communist society. At a plenary session of Inkhuk in November 1921, it was determined by majority vote that easel painting was finished as a historical possibility; that it belonged to an earlier historical moment; and that the true artistic expression appropriate to the moment was to be found in industrial and applied art. As Popova voted with the majority in this matter, she must have regarded her earlier work—those heavy exercises in analytical Cubism that seem today more the application of formula than inspired contributions to a new style—as emblematic of a phase of historical expression the world had lived through but must reject. "Art is finished!" wrote Alexei Gan. "It has no place in the working apparatus. Labor, technology, organization—that is today's ideology." Ilya Ehrenburg, who was close to the artists, expressed the overall feeling of the moment: "Art has died, once and for all. . . . It is no longer necessary to anyone." So the task of those who used to be artists is "to turn life into an organized process and thus to annihilate art." Popova is identified with the Constructivist movement, at least one wing of which said, "We declare uncompromising war on art!" A convenient formulation, which in its own way echoes Marx's Eleventh Thesis on Feuerbach, states: "We, the Constructivists, reject art since it is not expedient. Art by nature is passive, it only reflects reality. Constructivism is active, it not only reflects reality but acts itself."

It might appear in some degree inconsistent with the theses of historical materialism to *decide* by majority vote what ought by rights to have been left to the mechanisms of historical inevitability. Art, after all, was part of the passive superstructures of society, supposedly reflective of the economic forces that were the true determinants of social change, and causally inoperative in its own right: Art but distantly mirrors, as "the abstract ideal expressions of . . . social relations," the real engines of history. Such was classical Marxist theory, according to which, in the end, art was one of the ways in which human beings become conscious of the material conditions that shape their lives. But of course the claim would have been, after 1917, that history was essentially over, with all the objective contradictions having worked themselves explosively out. So for the first time, perhaps, art might be active rather than epiphenomenal. And one might then suppose it would be a moment for an artistic pluralism, parallel to the condition benignly promised in the pages of *The German Ideology*: "In communist society, where nobody has one exclusive sphere of activity . . . society regulates the general production and thus makes it possible for me to do one thing today and another thing tomorrow . . . just as I have a mind to." So one can be a Cubist in the morning, a Futurist in the afternoon, a Cubo-Futurist in the evening and after dinner design textiles, unless one feels like executing Suprematist squares. Alas, as we have learned (not only) from the post-revolutionary period of Soviet history, human beings do not operate with that degree of institutionalized generosity. They are (and artists are no better than bureaucrats: Think of how Chagall was hounded out of Vitebsk by the fervent Malevich) concerned to stipulate the artistically correct line, and to intimidate into conformity whoever resists aesthetic dictatorship.

Still, the early 1920s in Moscow, when Popova found her vocation, must have been intoxicating times for artists who

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William Blake

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had the license of the Revolution to find out what art was to be good for in the new society, and then the opportunity of a society in upheaval to put their cracked theories into practice, sometimes, as with Popova, with stunning results. In that era, "art" and "artist" were what philosophers have termed "essentially contested concepts." On the one side, the view was that the artist is more by far than a craftsperson, that art in its very essence is a spiritual activity, concerned with the enhancement by spiritual values of the higher dimensions of human life, and that art must inevitably be useless and superfluous in a society construed in practical, utilitarian terms. Art and practicality, from this perspective, are sufficiently opposed that in becoming practical, art stops being art. This was certainly the view of Malevich, as it was of Kandinsky. On the other side was the predictably contrary attitude that the artist in the new society must of necessity be a technician, whose slogan (as voiced by Tatlin) must be, "Art into life!" This in effect meant the abandonment of paintings, including the Suprematist paintings of Malevich, conceived of by him as points of entry into a realm of spirit and a "fourth dimension" [see Danto, "Art," April 8]. Instead, artists must concentrate on enhancing the lives of workers in the three-dimensional world of reorganized industrial reality. The studio, whose output had been the repudiated object of aesthetic delectation, was to be transformed into the laboratory, whose products were literally to be designated "production art."

This basic division appeared within as well as between artistic movements. Constructivists, for example, divided over the demand that art serve socially useful purposes. Pevsner and Gabo rejected this even though it was their view that art should reflect modern industrial processes and machinery, and even that it should use industrial products like glass and plastic. Tatlin and Rodchenko held to the inverse demand, according to which unapplied art is unacceptable. So when Alexei Gan, in a text titled "Constructivism," proclaimed the death of art, it was specifically art as a form of religion, as Malevich among others believed it to be, that Gan had in mind. "Let us cease our speculative activity," Gan went on, "and take over the healthy bases of art—color, line, materials, and forms—into the field of reality, of practical construction." Popova was among those most successful in making the transition, and we hardly need the moving declaration recorded in the 1924 catalogue to sense her exultation: All the works she did of applied art, and most especially her designs for the theater, express her sense of having found herself, of being at one with her work, of having found triumph, meaning, value, beauty and fulfillment.

*I find it profoundly affecting that this artist should find herself where she would least have expected it.*

With Popova, it is as if she were never so free a spirit as when she sacrificed her freedom of creativity to some end more social than the making of a painting. Consider, for example, the abstract works she did in her Suprematist period, roughly from 1916 to 1918. Her forms are largely the ones Malevich used—rhomboids, slightly eccentric rectangles, triangles and bars. Malevich, however, deploys his forms against a white space that conveys a sense of boundlessness, in which the forms float as if liberated from earthly constraints. They are painterly metaphors for spiritual freedom, intended as devices for the real liberation of the viewer's spirit: Everything soars, or floats, or flies, or hovers. Popova crowds her forms into the shallow spaces of Cubist painting: The distance from surface to background is almost infinitesimal; it is as if the forms are pressed between them, like leaves between the pages of a book. So her forms feel as if pasted against one another, without room enough to breathe. Malevich's colors have a singing clarity and are almost translucent: They imply light. Popova's colors are the colors of paint in its most material sense: scraped and scumbled on, opaque and chalky and heavy. In a way, her Suprematisms seem like Abstract Cubist works, and in some of them, like her *Painterly Architectonic* of 1916, the background has those parallel horizontal strokes one finds in the backgrounds of the Parisian Cubists. They are painterly paintings, but sullen: There is none of the dance of the brush but rather the sense of paint being pushed on with a trowel. With Malevich one feels paint is a means rather than the matter of his work, and that all his effort went into the dematerialization of his work, so that he would have used light had he known how to, or floated color onto space without the mediation of paint. For Popova, paint is of the earth. These are not exultant works.

Compare these claustrophobic exercises, which feel as if they were executed by someone who believed in abstraction as a kind of duty but who held none of the high-flying beliefs in its benefits (which fired Malevich or Kandinsky), with what I think of as Popova's masterworks, her brilliant costume designs for Meyerhold's production of Fernand Crommelynck's *The Magnanimous Cuckold* of 1922. There are three wonderful drawings of "working clothes" for the actors, who were indeed to wear "production clothing." The designs are like proclamatory posters, with red and black lettering declaring that the image is *prozodezhda* (production clothing) for *Aktera No. 5* (or Actor No. 6 or No. 7). The image itself is luminous and alive: Actor No. 5 is a woman wearing a blue overall with a black apron. The apron is a clever composition of Suprematist forms—squares, rectangles, horizontal and vertical bars, separated by thin white spaces. The sleeves are trapezoids, the collar triangles, the skirt a hexagon. In the *prozodezhda* for Actor No. 7, a red square looks like the lining of a cape held open, while the outer side is shown hanging, an irregular triangle, off the actor's shoulder. Everyone is given a visored cap, one is given goggles. The designs simply sing. They are imaginative, luminous, playful, gay and radiant with intelligence and taste.

In 1921, Popova began to paint what she termed "Space-Force Constructions," in which it appeared that she was endeavoring to comply with Constructivist injunctions by using industrial motifs painted on undisguisedly industrial material, in this case plywood. Oil paint on plywood, one feels, is an effort to yoke art and industry together by external conjunction; and the paintings, which are crisscrossed bars, like struts in a trestle or a suspension bridge, are not especially successful. Mixing marble dust with the paint does not greatly help. One senses the urgency and intelligence that the works seem only to frustrate, emblems of a thwarted artistic will. It is one thing for elements to be irregular in Suprematist imagery but quite another when they are intended to designate *industrial* forms. Throughout this series, one has the impression of an artist preparing herself for

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some achievement that has not disclosed its nature to her. And then, like an external destiny, a commission came from someone who saw her promise. This was the great dramaturge Vsevolod Meyerhold, who invited Popova to teach stage design, and more importantly to execute the set for *The Magnanimous Cuckold*.

Popova's set was conceived of as an apparatus for actors. From contemporary photographs, but most particularly from the unsurpassed drawings she made, we see the somewhat flaccid crisscrosses of the Space-Force Constructions stiffen and come to life as a scaffolding, with stairs and ramps that enable the actors to move from level to level, to slide down and shout across and, since it is an erotic comedy—a farce—to look up skirts and dart in and out of bedrooms. The setting in Crommelynck's play was to have been the interior of a mill, and indeed there is a system of wheels in Popova's set, black, yellow and red wheels that evidently functioned like a mechanized chorus to mark the degree of excitement in the action by rotating at various rates. At the upper left are the blades of the mill wheel itself. In Constructivist theater, the structures were meant to be nonrepresentational, or at least nonrealistic, and were intended merely to organize the space for action, to create what was understood literally as the actors' working space. Apart from Popova's scaffolding, the stage was to be empty, and audiences were shocked to see the bare brick of the house's back wall. And the actors of course were to wear "work clothes," roomy and comfortable and uniform, to enable them to execute Meyerhold's severe "biomechanical" stage directions. The basic idea of biomechanics is that the body is a machine, that we stand to our bodies as workers stand to machines, which we must learn to run efficiently and productively: There is no room for psychology, character, feelings. But the characters in *The Magnanimous Cuckold* in fact are driven by very strong feelings. The husband, Bruno, is jealous to the point of insanity; the faithful wife who endeavors to humor him is pressed by guilt and desperation. All this was to be translated into the mechanics of motion, which demanded extraordinary athletic prowess. Popova's set at the time was compared to an acrobat's trapeze, which has little by way of intrinsic beauty and is totally nonrepresentational. Its beauty is in its function, what it enables the acrobat to do.

The drawing for the stage set is, for me, the high point of the show. It brings the artist to the threshold of greatness. The drawing has again the look of a poster, with red and black sans-serif lettering and a witty metrical scale up its left edge. In the center is the stunning scaffold, with the system of wheels and ladders, and biomechanical stairways running in and out of either side. At the base of the left stairway, an actor is posed in a *prozodezhda* coverall, all in angles, like a Cubist lampstand. This does not constitute the imposition of a specific modernesque format on the human individual. It embodies, rather, the biomechanical ideal. The body looks like a mechanism of joined limbs, almost a robot, about to commence its jerky ascent, up the stairs and across the space like a jumping jack, prepared to execute the almost impossible directions of the inspired—or possessed—Meyerhold.

The Russian modernist painters were profoundly influenced by the French, whose work was made available to them through the hospitable collections of Shchukin and Morizov. Popova herself had gone to Paris to study with the lesser Cubists, Le Fauconnier and Metzinger, whose teachings she rather mechanically followed. It must have been the artistic authority of Paris that determined the presentation of Crommelynck's play, first staged in Paris in 1920. It is a strange and dreamful erotic comedy, whose heroine, Stella, has the ineluctable innocence of Krazy Kat. There is something almost bizarre in the thought that this should have been the great Constructivist theater, the vehicle for all that revolutionary aesthetic and for the symbolic representation of the ideal in a society of machines, in which feelings are extirpated and only efficiency counts. Popova's figures are faceless. But the drawing, like the set that translated it into three dimensions, is celebratory and engaging, and snaps with wit, cleverness and plastic verve. There were ominous rumblings from the *nomenklatura*. The commissar of education, Anatoly Lunacharsky, called *The Magnanimous Cuckold* "a decline for theatrical art, since a seizure of its territory by the clowns of the music hall." But the production, and especially Popova's sets and costumes, was a great hit. The scaffold itself became a cliché of advanced theater.

The catalogue I began by quoting goes on to say that in the very spring in which she died, "all Moscow was wearing fabric with designs by Popova without knowing it—vivid, strong drawings, full of movement, like the artist's own nature." I find it profoundly affecting that this artist


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should have found herself at last where she would, in her beginnings, least have expected it. Her paintings all look like pictures of movement that merely aspire to vividness and strength. These qualities, which eluded her in fine art, are triumphantly present in her designs, and in looking at them we cannot but feel that we are in the presence of this powerful and finally fortunate woman. □

A KILLING FROST

We are the last in this cold air
to walk in the garden.
Ozone strikes at every corner,
to sting, hissing
at the summers of once-were,
bleaching them zinc white,
until what was permanent—
petals thick with dye,
with the gum and honey
from bees—dies back to dirt.

Other perspectives
might have been different.
The apple tree, leaning,
flames grenadine. The beeches
look ochre. What is left of the oaks
is chinese orange, while
the butterfly weed, called
cadmium yellow, is actually
orange. Unperturbed
the helianthus remain marigold.

These are flowers, believe me.
We know them by their impermanence
and a Herculean capacity to dye.
The cobalt platycodon grow
where the dog walked. Last year
myosotis stained the hills
forget-me-not blue. It was
a viridian Spring: Hemlocks rose
as though cypress, dyer's broom
bloomed among the acacia,

and no frost lapped
at the grass-green grass,
until rain changed the series,
pouring gray into the ground,
into the dove gray fields
for the months ahead: Numbers
1, 2, 3 and 4, each a grizzled
square of pearls on paper,
when out-of-doors, wear the bark
of ash trunks 200 years old.

Now the brief Prussian evening
is jet ink washing my lake pale
geraniums. In the lampblack
no one sees the batwings.
In the livid light they startle
no one with their weeping
that winter has set.
During this period, which
the radio calls seasonal,
many zinnias will die.

*Anne Babson Carter*

# MUSIC.

## EDWARD W. SAID

### Style and Stylelessness

Among the unending complaints made by critics about opera directors like Peter Sellars who supposedly distort the classical composer's intention, I've never heard any objections to the even greater distortions involved in so-called concert performances of operas. Somehow it is claimed that if you reduce an opera to its alleged musical essence and put it on a concert platform, you serve both work and composer better. But if you let singers wear lavish evening dress and bellow out at the audience with no acting, stylistic principles or dramatic gestures to restrain them, you not only distort, you also mutilate an opera. After all, the composer intended the music to be an integral part of a dramatic construction. And composers, I believe, hear operatic music as bearing within it the stresses, the inflections and even the obstacles imposed on singers by the physical exertions required by acting on a stage with costumes, other singers, and so on. Opera is an extravagant art, as the title of Herbert Lindenberger's excellent book on the subject has it, and it may also be a form mainly allowing excess and superfluity. At any rate, opera is very impure and hybrid. However, as all serious scholars of the genre agree, opera is not unrestrained or formless, nor does it license totally uninhibited modes of display by contemporary performers.

The awful vulgarity, distortion and truly unoperatic excesses of the genre were exemplified as if for all time in a recent Carnegie Hall performance of Richard Strauss's *Elektra* by the Vienna Philharmonic under the direction of Lorin Maazel. To say that it did to operatic style what Operation Desert Storm did to Iraq is only to suggest what bombast and overkill can do. The vast orchestra was stretched out across the stage, over which was built a sort of V-shaped balcony (for victory in the desert?) studded with the cast of soloists. Eva Marton as Elektra stood at the front point; Brigitte Fassbaender as Klytemnestra and Elizabeth Connell as Chrysothemis stood behind her; James King and Franz Grundheber as Aegisth and Orest, respectively, stood behind them. Thus, no singer could address any other singer and roaring forward was the order of battle. To make matters worse, the auditorium was in total darkness (thus making the thoughtfully distributed libretto unreadable) except for garishly colored spotlights of lavender, red and green that shone on the singers when they sang, as well as an artful light playing about on the maestro, who conducted with a brio and brashness that produced a quite literally deafening glob of sound.

Even though the minor roles (handmaidens, knights, etc.) were competently sung, only James King in his tiny part among the principals suggested anything like drama, address or expression. The rest simply produced enormous amounts of sound, as if what Strauss and von Hofmannsthal intended was a two-hour festival of technicolor noise. Nothing remotely like words or phrases came across, especially from Marton, who poured forth sounds of indescribable volume and power to negligible emotional or dramatic effect. Surely Maazel was to blame for so ghastly a rendition of Strauss's last effort at advanced modernity.

First performed in 1909, *Elektra* had an idiom intended to shock by introducing the audience to a harmonic language a step beyond *Tristan* and a stop short of complete atonality. Its libretto was based on Sophocles' play, brought up to date by modern psychotherapy, with decadence as an aesthetic and expressionism as a sort of extreme conveyor of dramatic action. Little of this came through in Maazel's version, which remained fixated on "effects," with scant regard for continuity, persuasiveness or stylistic manners. It was loud, attention-getting, brassy.

Perhaps I read too much into the V-shaped construction that symbolized both the idea that audiences were to be passive recipients of uninterrupted bombast and the moment's all-round triumphalism. But it contrasts starkly with an early February performance by the conductorless Orpheus Chamber Orchestra at Carnegie Hall. This is a remarkable group of mostly young musicians that I've heard in an impressive series of concerts in New York City. Like many other such groups, the core of their repertory is Viennese classicism, with occasional essays in Slavic

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or twentieth-century tonal works. Unlike some other essentially chamber groups (for example, the London Classical Players, Academy of St. Martin-in-the-Fields, Orchestra of the Enlightenment and Orchestra of St. Luke's) they do not make a fetish of authenticity or eccentricity. What gave them particular distinction was revealed, for instance, in the first measures of the Schubert Fifth Symphony, which opened their Carnegie concert. After three chords and a descending scale on the dominant, the movement's main theme (an arpeggiated tonic chord) is announced, usually with considerable fussiness and teasing. Not so by Orpheus: The almost dazzling unobtrusiveness of the motif came across with elegant and simple force, the consequence of a chamber-music attitude that has instrumentalists playing together inward, so to speak, rather than outward to a conductor monopolizing control over them and the audience.

This is striking, perhaps even paradoxical, since public performance is about display, not about inwardness. On the other hand, Orpheus's programs are generally conservative and familiar, and strike one as studiously unadventurous, as if to highlight delicacy of execution and taste rather than dazzlement and virtuosity. Their soloist for the Mozart C Minor Concerto was Radu Lupu, certainly the most fastidious and self-effacing of contemporary pianists, a performer whose pianissimos, rhythmic intelligence and, yes, scales are incredible, but whose strong musical personality is expressed, like Orpheus's, by understatement and an almost stoical reflectiveness. In fine, Orpheus keeps unresolved the paradox between the required extroversion of a really communicative performance and the controlled introversion of musicians playing for and with one another.

It is a pleasure to report that after numerous unsatisfying productions New York's Metropolitan Opera has managed a feat roughly similar to Orpheus's in its recent productions of Rossini's *Semiramide* (1823) and Janacek's *Katya Kabanova* (1921), two relatively rare operas by extravagantly gifted but deeply opposed musical geniuses. It remains the Met's policy not to allow translations or supertitles, the absence of which for *Katya* especially is a real pity, given the compression and complexity of the text as adapted from Ostrovsky's famous play *The Storm*. Jonathan Miller directed the


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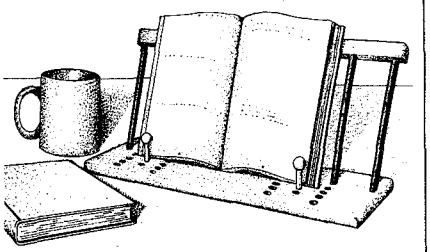

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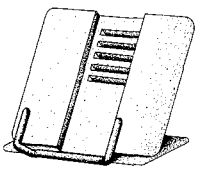

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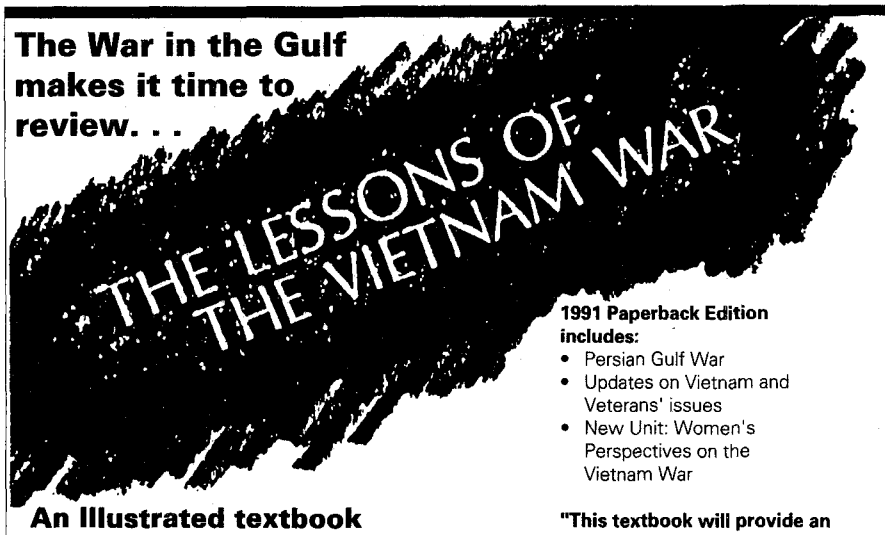


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production; Charles Mackerras, today's reigning Janacek interpreter, conducted. Whereas *Semiramide* is the almost parodistic embodiment of display, *Katya* has the manner of a quiet chamber opera, although its material is both generally provocative in a Strindbergian sense and musically as well as dramatically a considerable challenge for orchestra and singers. The core of Janacek's vision is the conflict between Katya and her mother-in-law, Kabanicha, who represents repressive conventionality, albeit with a kind of theatricality that Leonie Rysanek, who sang the role with florid obduracy, was able to project most effectively. Katya is unhappily married to Tichon and betrays him with Boris Grigoryevich, a cultivated young visitor to the provincial Russian town Kalinov, where Katya lives.

*One feels Rossini going through dramatic situation and character in order to lay bare the core of his musical inventiveness.*

Miller's production highlighted the tension between a surface of respectability and conversational exchange on the one hand, and on the other, an uncontainable sexual drive, dark and suicidal in its consequences. (Despite its hysterical atmosphere, *Elektra* does not project as disturbing a world as *Katya Kabanova*.) In conformity with Miller's conception, the barren set designed by Robert Israel allows what appears to be amiable everydayness to go on between various groups of people—until an outburst ruptures the calm. What Miller got out of his mostly excellent cast was a persuasive combination of ordinariness and psychological disturbance; yet nowhere did one feel, except as a fleeting hint, the staginess or melodrama with which Janacek seems occasionally to flirt in this profoundly Russophilic work. There was conviction, suffering and, given the remarkable score, a kind of rapturous concentration from orchestra and singers. Aside from Rysanek, especially good were Susan Quittmeyer as Varvara, Kabanicha's stepdaughter, and Aage Haugland, as a rich and vulgar tradesman who in a compelling Dostoyevskian scene imitates the groveling of a peasant before the redoubtable dowager with terrifying heedlessness.

The one flaw in *Katya* was Katya herself, as sung by the formidable Czechoslovak soprano Gabriela Benackova, the only member of the cast to be singing in her native language. She was also the only member of the group of ten principals rarely to sing to, or play along with, the others. With her face resolutely turned toward the audience, she sang admirably—her voice is a superb instrument—but with little dramatic force or, interestingly, focus. She might have been singing an oratorio, for instance, so little did she seem part of the gripping proceedings around her. Moreover, I sensed no particular appreciation of Janacek's stunning flights of musical inspiration, in which (Act I, Scene 2, for example) Katya suddenly departs her prosaic existence for a narrative of earlier bliss. Miller had set up that particular episode brilliantly: The two women, Katya and Varvara, are at center stage, framed by a toy house (perhaps an allusion to Ibsen's doll's house), itself unframed by anything outside it except an empty stage and one or two distant clouds. Katya's long reverie gradually breaches the silly restriction of daily routine—she is, after all, an *ordinary* person—through a masterly set of repeated and increasingly dense and gradually ecstatic orchestral accompaniments, from shimmering violins and flute to a pizzicato bass and assertive horn; from an impressionistic aural vagueness to an almost sentimental melodic cadence, at which point Katya says that she can see birds and angels singing, and from a great height can also feel an isolated, dispossessed sort of freedom.

The power of this isn't that Katya rises free of her circumstances, but that she obviously can't, and will in effect allow herself to be destroyed by them. Thus what the singer performing Katya needs is a highly provisional, vulnerable and emotionally true rendition of what Janacek's music conveys in its turns and shifts. Miller had it ready to be realized on stage, but Benackova did not. She sang the notes perfectly, but only that. I felt that here was a dutiful, though technically glorious, recitation but not a dramatic reading of this magnificent part, everywhere counterpointed by Mackerras's genuine flexibility and understanding. So the production was somewhat incapacitated by this central flaw, but it was far from unsuccessful nonetheless. The thing about Janacek that Miller grasped so intelligently is that his operatic idiom combines stubbornness and an accommodating delicacy that is musically guided by psychological restlessness and not by theatricality or by the easy conclusiveness provided by conventional harmony. When Katya kills herself despairingly at the end you are meant to feel the sorrow, but you almost immediately experience the unvarying pressures of daily life as Kabanicha accepts the murmured attention of the grieving crowd, whom she still sees as her loyally correct vassals. It is a unique sort of musical and dramatic *aperçu*, gross insensitivity covering itself in convention right after a most unconventional occurrence, that only Janacek in this century seems to have specialized in. But it needs great discipline for an ensemble to manage it; would that it had succeeded somewhat more, although the second time I saw the performance it seemed to me more integrated and therefore satisfying.

If *Katya* is difficult to put on because so much of it stands outside the well-charted operatic and dramatic lanes, *Semiramide* is difficult because it is rooted in very specific early nineteenth-century practice, very remote from late twentieth-century performance styles. I had a much quickened sense of this a short while after I had seen the Met's production, when I heard Philip Gossett of the University of Chicago in a gripping Gauss lecture at Princeton. Along with Alberto Zedda, Gossett has over the years been re-establishing the Rossini texts both with scrupulous scholarship and a very elegant, innately musical style. At Princeton he spoke about what was acceptable and what was not in nineteenth-century styles of singing Rossini's florid and often improvised ornamentation. Since the Met was using his text of *Semiramide*, and since he had worked with the Met on this production as its "stylistic adviser," it is no wonder that this season's *Semiramide* was a great triumph.

What I found interesting in what he said, and what the superb Met principals (primarily Marilyn Horne, June Anderson, Samuel Ramey, John Cheek and Young Ok Shin) actually sang, is that Rossini performances cannot easily be codified into what was and was not acceptable. Instead, Gossett showed that there was a whole range of divergent practices used from which artists could choose, beyond which no one went (or should now go), even though those practices are were like a language learned, passed on and pretty much held to. Un-

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like *Katya Kabanova*, *Semiramide* is built around an impossibly rococo plot involving murder, incest and all kinds of duplicity. Everything about it suggests excess, display, gregariously unself-conscious delight in musical fireworks. Here too (as the lamentable *Elektra* performance inversely proved to its calamitous disadvantage) there are rules and restraints requiring great vocal agility—Horne and Ramey are particularly splendid examples of this—and nothing of the "realism" that so earnestly comes to dominate Italian opera after Rossini.

Rossini was celebrated for his sarcasm and laziness. On being asked which was his favorite among his own operas he snapped, "*Don Giovanni*." Stendhal's admiring memoir of Rossini is inexplicably negative about *Semiramide*, which is actually so full of melody and inventiveness as to be overwhelming, almost impossible to take in. Conducted admirably and efficiently by James Conlon, the Met production spilled itself out tumultuously, the music completely mastering and even in the end bypassing the plot altogether. As a comic genius Rossini matched drama and music to each other quite perfectly. In the greatest of his serious works, of which *Tancredi* and *Semiramide* are perhaps the pre-eminent cases, one feels Rossini going through expression, dramatic situation and character in order to lay bare the core of his musical inventiveness. The result, I think, is a kind of metamusic, music about music, or music largely detached from its social and historical encumbrances.

Like Stendhal, Rossini was the product of a horrendously disenchanted and reactionary Europe. It is tempting to understand both these great artists as using an extremely worldly and knowing fluency in their art to assert a tremendously antithetical vitality against an undeserving and uncomprehending society. And both artists never relax their grip on rationality, even while on the greatest flights. Theirs is a strange exorbitance, as invigorating as it is refined—particularly in such depressing times as these, when performance is as likely to be coercive as it is styleless, and pointless. I know it seems perverse to say that because its excesses are so unrelenting and severe *Semiramide* seems more like opera contemplating rather than presenting itself, but this is how it seemed to me, and thus the connection with the Orpheus Orchestra both in the myth and in the intensity of performance. □

# EXCHANGE.

(*Continued From Page 578*)

world. The struggle is to overcome and dismantle that objective oppression; not to indulge in fantasies of reified psychological demons. *Richard Lichtman*

**DEMAUSE REPLIES**

*New York City*

I plead *mea culpa* to being both Freudian and reductionist, the former because psychoanalysis is still the best theory of human emotions and the latter because science is the art of reducing apparently complex phenomena to simpler underlying patterns. That this makes me a reactionary because I do not accept traditional economic determinism does not follow, however.

The first thing I learned in economics many decades ago at Columbia College is that the "economic man" assumptions of class-interest theories are thoroughly psychological. But they are based on an outdated behaviorist psychology, whereas modern psychohistorians propose an economic and political analysis based on modern depth psychology. Sometimes nations and classes act according to their utilitarian interests, and sometimes not. The gulf war, like the Vietnam and Korean wars, was hardly a rational economic venture, no matter what group you may assume manipulates the nation.

It is, I admit, tempting to believe that most Americans simply made a mistake in following "a small portion of the . . . ruling class," but the evidence goes against this simplistic formula. How a small group could move the emotions of a quarter-billion people to cheer the invasion—against their economic interests, by the way—is a mystery. And the claim that nations do not have shared emotions is patently ridiculous: The pattern of these shared emotions is the subject of every history book ever written.

Yes, scholarly books like those of my friend Alice Miller have been popular for several years, and some have felt "assaulted" by the unpleasant facts about child abuse they have uncovered. I myself wrote a book called *The History of Childhood* some time ago that showed that childhood has been a nightmare for most people in most countries until recently. But what I said in my article was more specific: I said images of hurt children and terrifying parents were far more prevalent in the media—especially in political cartoons and magazine covers—prior to the gulf crisis than they were in the preceding years. This is an empirical finding based on examining more than 10,000 cartoons and covers, not a guess. America found Saddam Hussein's actions unacceptable in August 1990 because we were then ready for a demon, while his actions in the 1980s were encouraged because earlier we were not.

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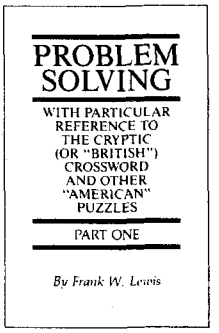
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That America did not have a period of increasing prosperity in the years prior to the gulf crisis is simply bad economic history. American G.N.P. last August was higher than at any time in history, although the bottom 20 percent did lose ground during the 1980s, far more than the top 20 percent benefited. Most of those who approved of the war were in the top and middle rather than the bottom in terms of prosperity. Nor was the United States in fact "mired in depression" until World War II began; G.N.P. passed the 1929 high of $315 billion by the end of 1938, three years before we went to war. The statistical evidence for wars coming more often after periods of prosperity and rarely during recessions is quite massive.

This, of course, doesn't prove my theory of guilt and depression and the sacrificial intent of wars. What does suggest that it is true is the empirical finding that fantasies of guilt, depression and sacrifice regularly precede wars. This is certainly a counter-intuitive finding; I know I was surprised when I came upon it myself. But only the methodical analysis of huge amounts of media fantasies makes the emotional basis of historical events apparent.

There is a very good reason to doubt that if Bush had announced in January we should achieve our political ends peacefully America would have accepted that decision. When Jimmy Carter did the same thing in the same area of the world, his ratings plummeted, and we threw him out after his first term. Reasonable decisions in unreasonable times are, I am afraid, unpopular. The enormous popularity of warrior George Bush today hardly promises more rational actions during the remainder of his time in office.

Unfortunately, people who have been subject to abusive childhoods are very prone to "appeals to deeply held emotional predispositions." And it is precisely those shared emotions that I have tried to study in my psychohistorical work. *Lloyd deMause*

### CORRECTION

Verso is the publisher of Dan La Botz's *Rank-and-File Rebellion*, reviewed by Jonathan Tasini [March 25].

### AUTHOR'S QUERY

For a biography of I.F. Stone (1907–1989), I would appreciate hearing from charter subscribers to "I.F. Stone's Weekly" and from anyone with letters, photographs or recollections from relatives, friends or former colleagues at the Philadelphia *Record*, the *New York Post*, *The Nation*, *PM*, the *New York Star* or the *Daily Compass*.

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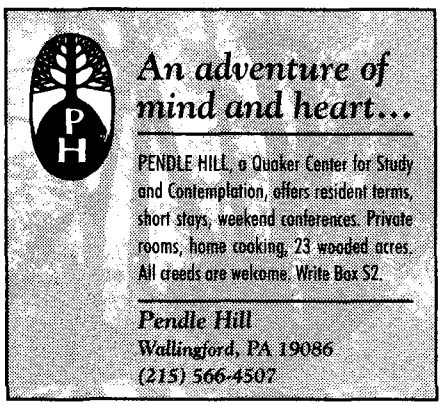
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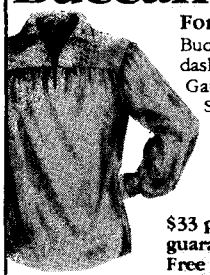

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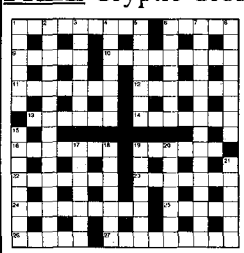

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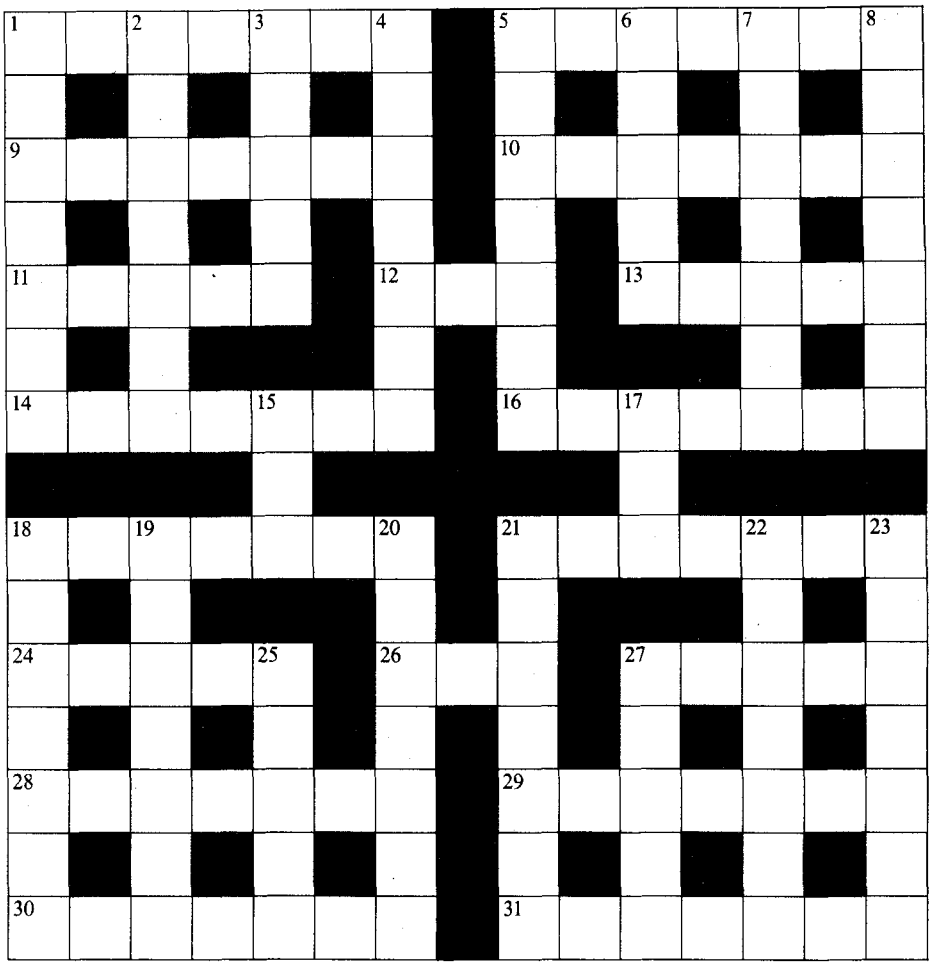
# Crossword Puzzle No. 2335

FRANK W. LEWIS



### ACROSS

1 The sound of drumming opens the nursery reference to a bathing trio. Were they in 5 . . . (3-1-3)
5 . . . and shipwrecked where the gravy boat might wind up? (7)
9 Possibly found near mud, but more likely the heartwood of some tree. (7)
10 Made another stage appearance, in response to something stimulating? (7)
11, 12 and 13 Common troubles each found bad at first, with what's in the kiddies' box going to Spain, improbably. (5,3,5)
14 The one who blows the whistle on an Indian gets a barely passing grade, which is proven to be false . . . (7)
16 . . . where other Indians followed both North and South. (7)
18 Luck with a beginner, possibly, in church. (7)
21 It's possibly put in ovens, though not all approve of the kill required. (7)
24, 17 down and 27 across A relative of the Pinniedia ends up with a production of *Tosca* put on with *Rain* possibly. (8,5)
26 See 25 down
28 Reputedly should consist of only a few good words, as seen in "Decrepit Aphorism." (7)
29 With more brass? (7)
30 No different kinds of such that offer protection if you start to make a slip. (7)
31 At least one hand is not correct with one. (Being dismal is pointless.) (7)

### DOWN

1 A requirement for membership in a Sherlock Holmes league. (3,4)
2 and 19 down A good picture of what 1865 might suggest for the magazine. (5,2,1,7)
3 and 15 Things superior to certain religious and state buildings have a shaky conclusion as a description of science in some schools. (8)
4 James, the agent, ran up inside to get a painter. (7)
5 Do away with something indeed! (It's made fun of!) (7)
6 It might be necessary to send the message, "Put your foot down hard!" (5)
7 Irishman taking to insurrection, exemplified to them by Emmett? (7)
8 They're barely noticeable at some beaches. (7)
15 See 3
17 See 24 across
18 Get a little over a hundred back? (You can't say it doesn't hold water!) (7)
19 See 2
20 Part of the hotel at Cheddar is locked up. (7)
21 Only six and French, and the old boy comes up with a name for the country. (7)
22 The music hall singer loved to be beside it. (7)
23 It helps to take a breath of the piano's trill, as you can see. (7)
25, 26 across and 27 A pile-up with the St. Louis players? (If you did, you'd be cheating and there'd be a 31!) (5,3,5)

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